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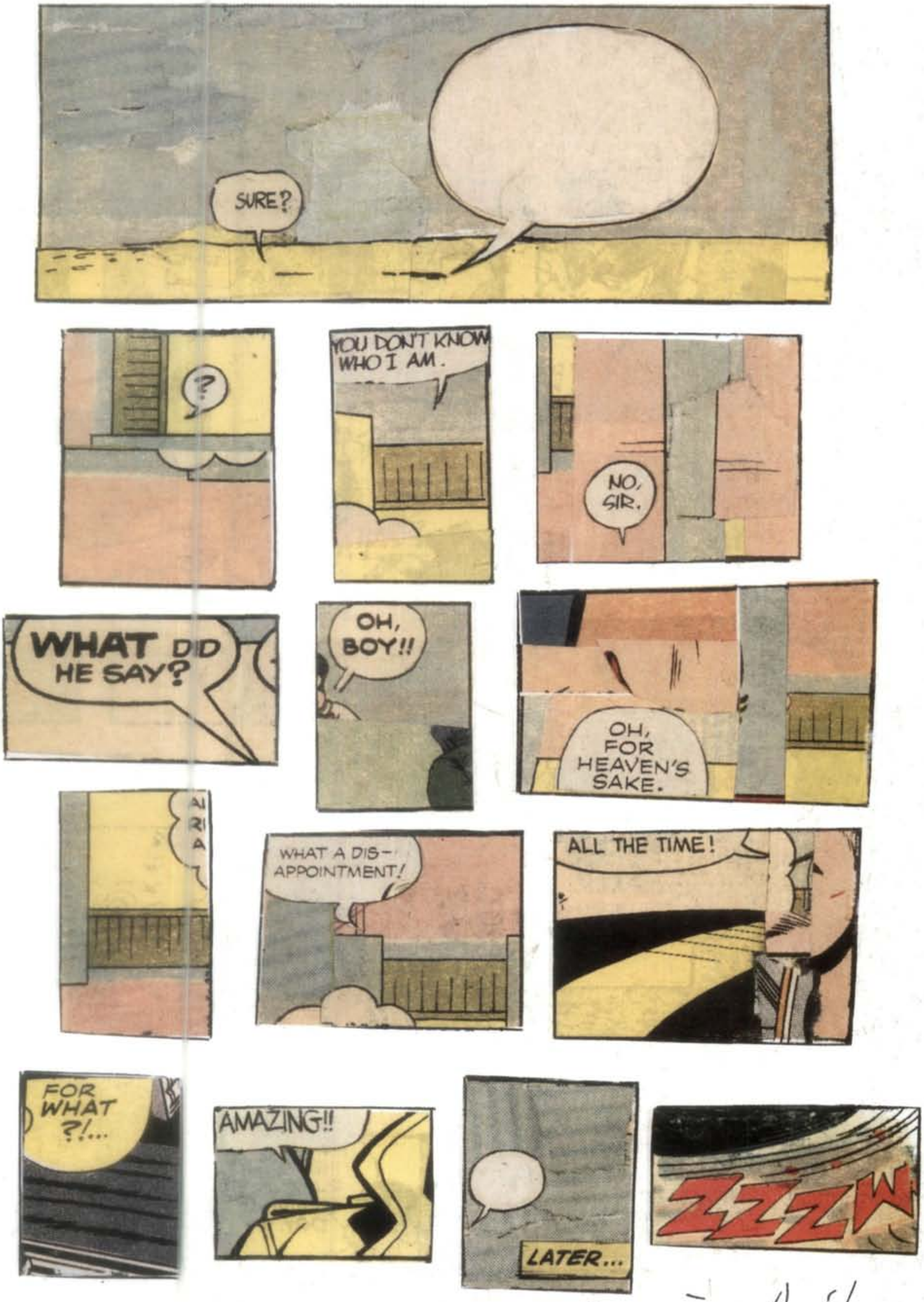
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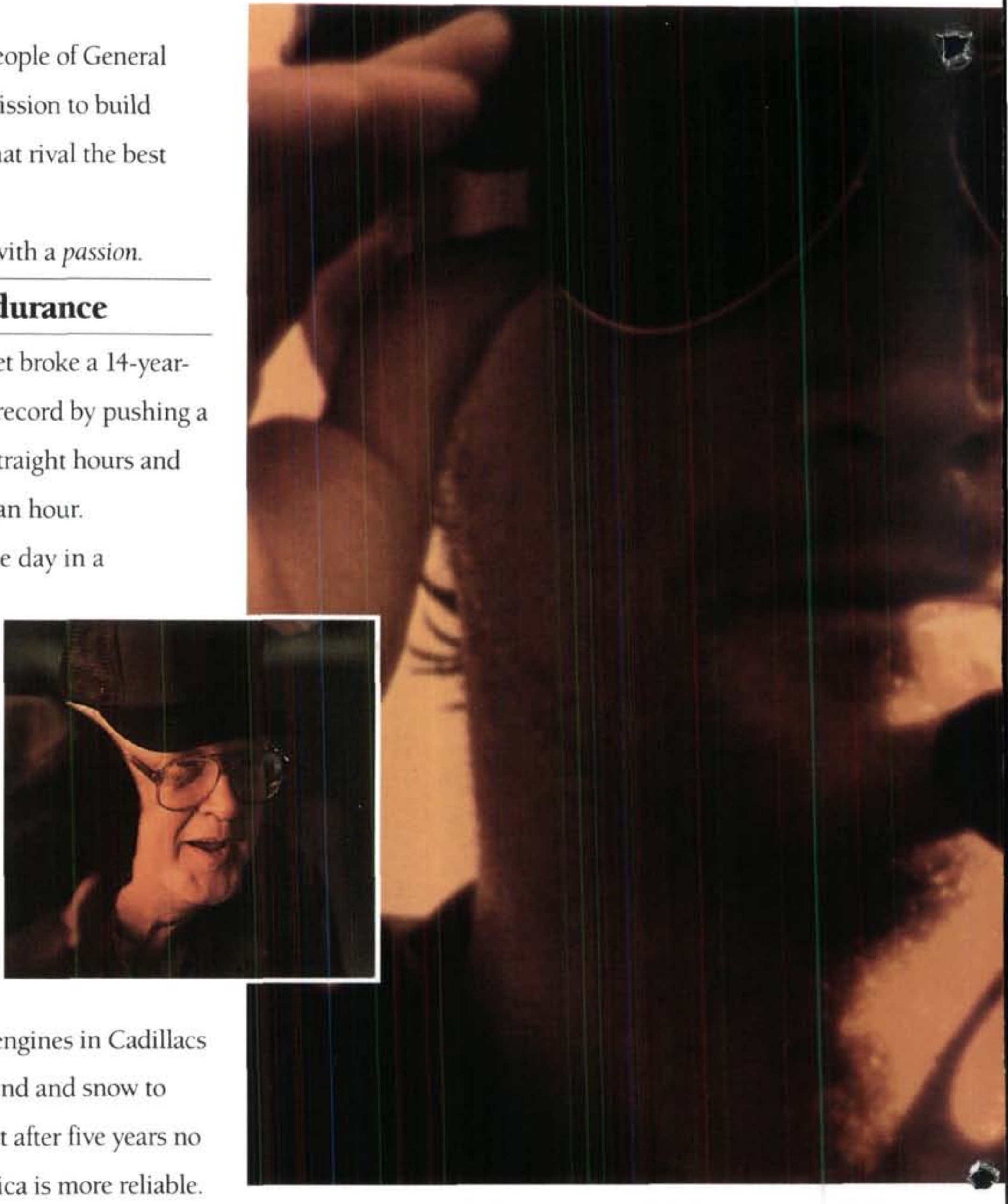

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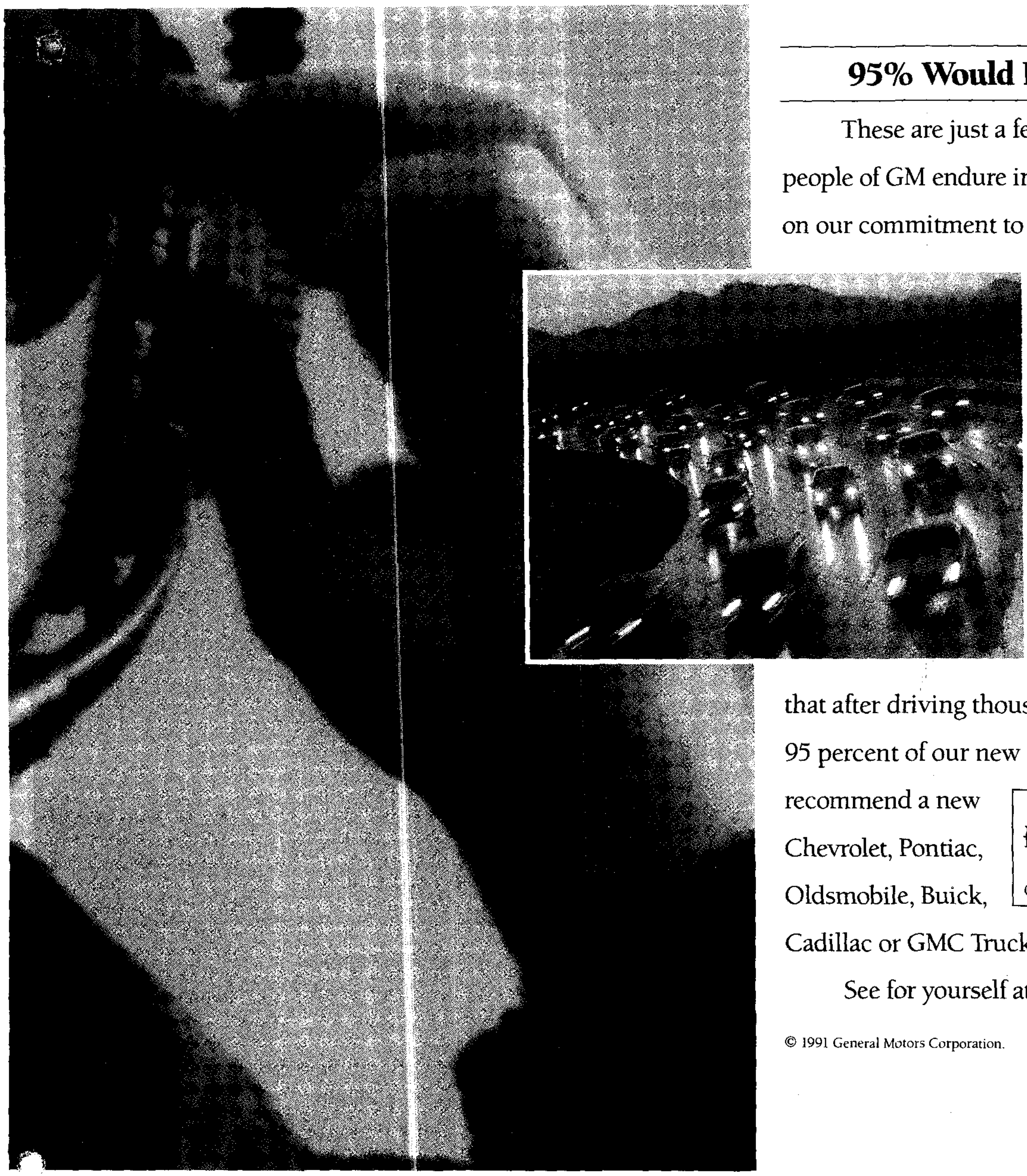

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

IT'S rare these days for anyone to use cabaret as an avant-garde playground or as a laboratory of dissent. "Cabaret Verboten," which opens this week at CSC Rep, is an attempt to reassert the form's political side. The evening promises a variety of songs from cabaret's golden age in Weimar Germany—some incendiary, some not, but all unperformable after Hitler banned cabaret, in 1935. There's some Brecht, of course, but also remnants of, among other groups, Werner Finck's anti-Fascist Katakombe and Friedrich Hollaender's Tingel-Tangel. Hollaender's acidic sendup of Nazi propaganda, "The Jews Are All to Blame," set to music from "Carmen," went over big when it was performed this past spring in Los Angeles, as part of an earlier version of "Verboten." In California, the show was a corollary to an immense exhibition, at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, that featured paintings deemed "degenerate" by the Nazis. This time, those seeking similar connections between the arts will have to travel to Washington, where the exhibition will be at the Smithsonian, through January 5. "Cabaret Verboten" runs through November 24 at CSC.

The problem of censorship, so central to the CSC show, is something with which PEN has been involved for years. The literary organization's upcoming reading and panel discussion "Why Be a Playwright?" does not address the issue directly, but given the participants—John Guare, David Henry Hwang, Wendy Wasserstein, Charlie Schulman, Suzan-Lori Parks, and Mindi Dickstein—no one will be surprised if it comes up. The event takes place at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts' Bruno Walter Auditorium (40 Lincoln Center Plaza) on October 28, at 7:30 P.M. Admission is free.

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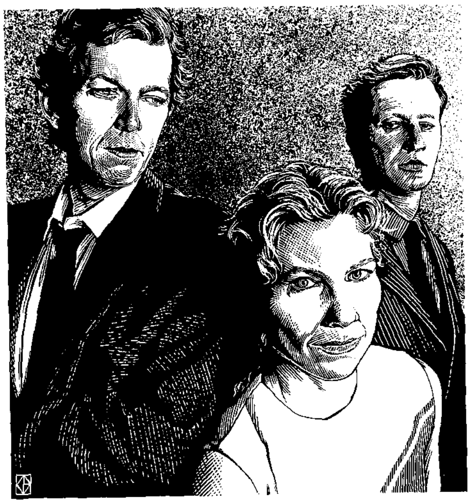
	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			



Roy Dotrice, Lindsay Crouse, and Daniel Gerroll in "The Homecoming"

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

The Balcony—The Willow Cabin Theatre Company's production of Jean Genet's play. Opens Oct. 18 at 8, and runs through Nov. 10. (INTAR II, 508 W. 53rd St. 886-1889.)

Beggars in the House of Plenty—A new play written and directed by John Patrick Shanley. Loren Dean, Dana Ivey, and Jon Tenney are in the cast. Preview on Oct. 22. Opens Oct. 23 at 7:30. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

Cabaret Verboten—John Rubinstein, Carole Shelley, Mark Nelson, and Betsy Joslyn in songs and sketches from Germany's Weimar era. Jeremy Lawrence conceived the show, which runs in repertory with "Bon Appétit!" Previews through Oct. 27 at 3. Opens Oct. 27 at 7. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

Dancing at Lughnasa—The Abbey Theatre production of Brian Friel's new play. Patrick Mason directed, and the cast consists of Bríd Brennan, Catherine Byrne, Donal Donnelly, Robert Gwilym, Rosaleen Linehan, Gerard McSorley, Dearbhla Molloy, and Bríd Ní Neachtain. Previews Oct. 22-23. Opens Oct. 24 at 6:30. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Futz—A revival of Rochelle Owens' 1967 play. Opens Oct. 18 at 7:30, and runs through Nov. 3. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

The Homecoming—A revival of the Harold Pinter play inaugurates the Roundabout Theatre's first season in its new Broadway location. With Lindsay Crouse, Roy Dotrice, Daniel Gerroll, and Jonathan Hogan. Previews through Oct. 27 at 2. Opens Oct 27 at 7. (Criterion Center, Broadway at 45th St. 239-6200.)

Negro Ensemble Company—Presenting **JUST A NIGHT OUT**, a new musical by Richard and Susan Turner. In previews. (Top of the Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

Nick & Nora—Barry Bostwick and Joanna Gleason are Nick and Nora Charles in this musical murder mystery—inspired by Dashiell Hammett's "Thin Man" characters—by Arthur Laurents (book), Charles Strouse (score), and Richard Maltby, Jr. (lyrics). Mr. Laurents directed. Also with Christine Baranski and Chris Sarandon. In previews. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

A Piece of My Heart—A play by Shirley Lauro, based on the 1986 book by Keith Walker. Presented by Manhattan Theatre Club. In previews. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 581-7907.)

Servy-n-Bernice 4Ever—A drama by Seth Zvi Rosenfeld, with Ron Eldard and Lisa Gay Hamilton. Terry Kinney directed. Opens Oct. 22 at 7. Preview on Oct. 21. (Provincetown, 133 Macdougal St. 477-5048.)

The White Rose—A play by Lillian Garrett-Groag kicks off the WPA Theatre's new season. Previews through Oct. 27. Opens Oct. 29 at 8. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

OPENED RECENTLY

André Heller's Wonderhouse—A show that is billed as a "theatrical entertainment." (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

And the World Goes 'Round: The Songs of Kander & Ebb—A musical revue, with a five-member cast that includes Karen Ziémba. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

The Baby Dance—Linda Purl and Stephanie Zimbalist star in a new play by Jane Anderson. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

Beau Jest—A comedy by James Sherman, which was originally done last year, in Chicago. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

Body and Soul—John Jason and Tom Delling have the leads in John Glines' gay romantic comedy. (Courtyard Playhouse, 39 Grove St. 869-3530. Closes Nov. 3.)

Bon Appétit!—Jean Stapleton in two short operas by Lee Hoiby. The first is a musical staging of Ruth Draper's monologue "The Italian Lesson"; the second is a setting of a Julia Child cooking lesson. Performed in repertory with "Cabaret Verboten." (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

Breaking Legs—The Mafia meets Off Broadway. Philip Bosco and Vincent Gardenia play a pair of mobsters who back a new play in order to win a young dramatist for Gardenia's daughter. Tom Dulack wrote the comedy; John Tillinger directed it. With Larry Storch, Ronald Maccone, Nick Wyman, and, above all, Susan Giosa as the daughter who spins the plot. (Reviewed in our issue of 6/3/91.) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Circle Repertory Company—**BABYLON GARDENS**, Timothy Mason's angst-ridden new play about the grim life of an East Village couple, provides a real field day for those who never tire of commiserating with the affluent-hip. In it Timothy Hutton and Mary-Louise Parker do a lot of relentless acting—he being sensitive, she being quirkily prosaic—and nearly all the performances, under Joe Mantello's direction, are unbearably stagy. (10/21/91) (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100. Closes Nov. 3.)

Distant Fires—Giancarlo Esposito and Ray Anthony Thomas in a play written by Kevin Heelan and directed by Clark Gregg. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 645-8755. Closes Nov. 2.)

Folks Remembers a Missing Page—A one-man show by J. E. Gaines. Sonny Jim, Mr. Gaines' alter ego, is an opinionated old derelict, sharp of mind and memory, who evokes, by description and with light stabs of mimicry of many of its snappier citizens, the golden days of Harlem, before the Second World War. Much of the material is familiar, but it seems fresh as paint. (10/7/91) (Nat Horne, 440 W. 42nd St. 307-7171.)

The Good Times Are Killing Me—The cartoonist Lynda Barry devised this memory play of words and pop tunes about a racially mixed neighborhood. At the heart of it is the friendship of two little girls, one white, the other black, who are delightfully portrayed by Angela Goethals and Chandra Wilson. The undercurrent of serious comment on race doesn't add much, but every humorous scene scores a bull's-eye. Mark Brokaw directed. (5/6/91) (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

Jean Cocteau Repertory—Presenting two plays in rotating repertory: **THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH**, by Thornton Wilder, and **GENEVA**, by George Bernard Shaw. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

Lips Together, Teeth Apart—Two couples share a beach house on Fire Island over the Fourth of July weekend, in Terrence McNally's very funny play about a number of serious matters. With Hillary Bailey Smith, Jonathan Hadary, Roxanne Hart, and Anthony Heald; directed by John Tillinger. (7/8/91) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

Lost in Yonkers—There's not one glimmer of honesty or authenticity in this family melodrama by Neil Simon. Set in Yonkers during the Second World War, it's about what happens when a cowering, pathetic man has to leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (3/11/91) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

Miss Saigon—Oh, the horror! The horror! (4/29/91) (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.)

The Novelist—In his new play, Howard Fast has given Jane Austen a love interest named Captain Thomas Crighton. (Theatre Row Theatre, 424 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

On Borrowed Time—A revival of the 1938 play by Paul Osborn, with George C. Scott, who also directed, Conrad Bain, Nathan Lane, and Teresa Wright. (10/21/91) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

Our Lady of the Tortilla—A comedy written by Luis Santeiro and directed by Max Ferra. Three performances a week are in English, and three are in Spanish. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 869-3530. Closes Nov. 10.)

Penn & Teller Rot in Hell—Seen recently on the Great White Way, the dynamic duo are now performing their repertoire of tricks Off

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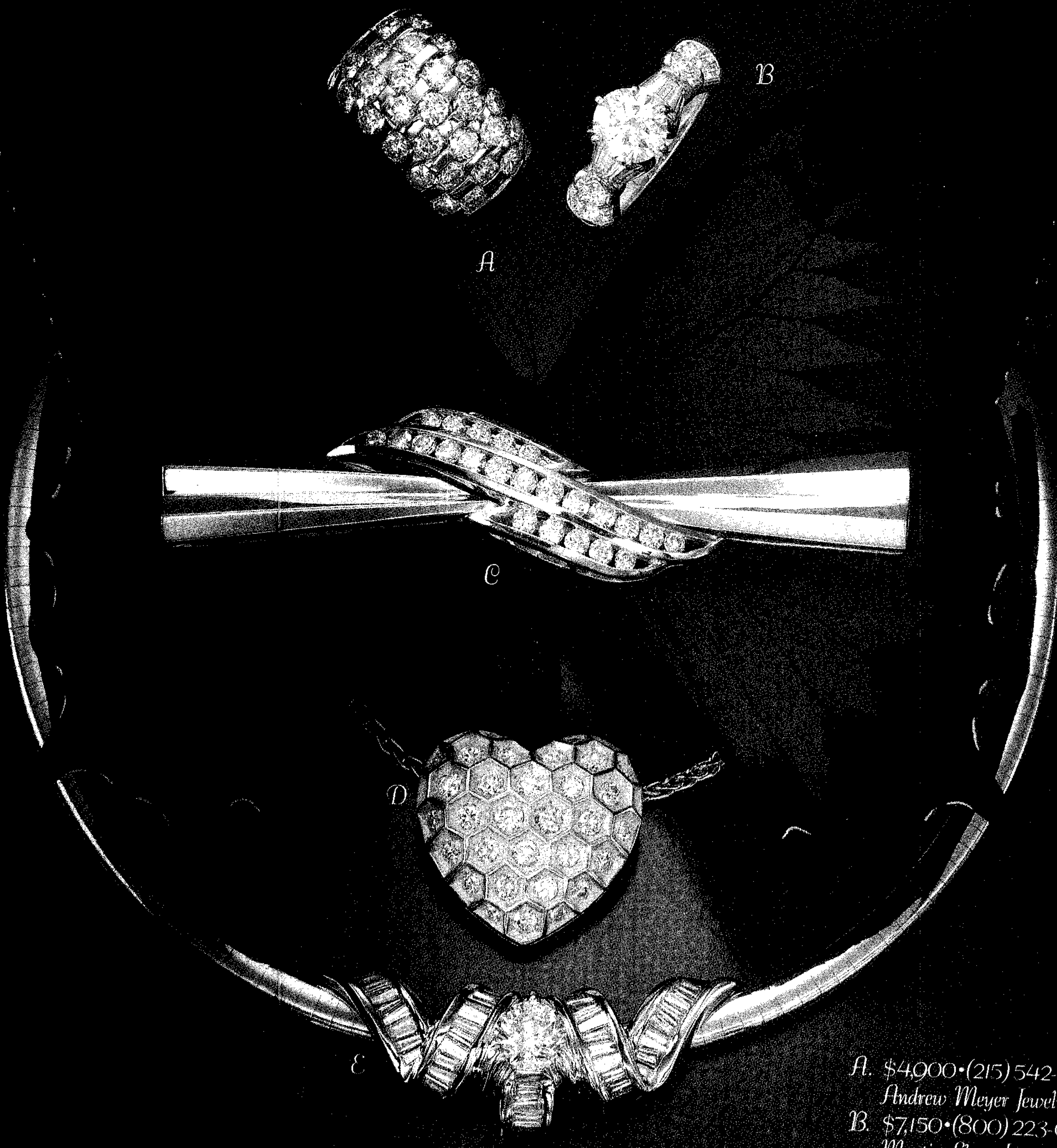

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THE THEATRE–Cont'd

Broadway. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

The Radiant City—A work by Theodora Skipitares about Robert Moses, which uses life-size puppets, slides, and live music, among other things. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074. Closes Oct. 27.)

The Real Live Brady Bunch—Episodes from the acclaimed TV series, reënacted by the Annoyance Theatre, of Chicago. Something called "The Real Live Game Show" comes first. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

Return to the Forbidden Planet—Gabriel Barré, Julee Cruise, Robert McCormick, and Louis Tucci are all adorable in this light-minded entertainment, a London import which won the Laurence Olivier Award for best musical in a year when it might have gone to "Miss Saigon" (whose producer's indignation led to the creation of a new award category). The show—a patchwork of beloved pop songs stitched together with Shakespeareana—has almost nothing to do with the cult movie it is based on, and *still* less to do with "The Tempest." It is more than anything else an occasion to laugh a bit and rock out a lot. One wishes the writer-director, Bob Carlton, had not cluttered up the newly restored Variety Arts (and the production) with the trappings of a spaceship flight in which the audience is meant to take part. But, as one audience member was heard to remark, "Any show that could make Cameron Mackintosh that mad has something to be said for it." (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

The Secret Garden—This lovely musical adaptation of the classic children's story by Frances Hodgson Burnett isn't just a kiddie show. Subtle, charming, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation, it manages both to be faithful to the spirit of the book and to comment on the particular moment in time that produced it. (5/13/91) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Song of Singapore—A musical with a promising concept: turn a Polish veterans' hall into a Singapore night club, circa 1941, and spill murder and mayhem onto the premises. Unfortunately, the lavish settings (by John Lee Beatty) and the musical talent (led by the winsome and versatile Donna Murphy) cannot conceal a very thin story and a host of excruciatingly bad jokes. Another problem: on a busy *night the seating arrangements* here can be extremely cramped. (17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. 228-0844.)

Unidentified Human Remains and the True Nature of Love—All is not well in Edmonton, Canada—that's the news in Brad Fraser's play about down-and-outers in one of Canada's provincial capitals. The script, which would have been passé in 1975, is full of desperate young people doing drugs, having sex, leaving telephone messages, committing gory crimes, making prophecies, and crying out in anguish. Tennis, anyone? (9/30/91) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

The Will Rogers Follies—The sets by Tony Walton, the direction and choreography by Tommy Tune, the costumes by Willa Kim, and the row upon row of Ziegfeld girls make a feast for the eyes, but the funny bone and heart are neglected. Keith Carradine makes an engaging, amusing Rogers, but that is not enough, despite Cy Coleman's pleasant score. (5/13/91) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)

LONG RUNS

CATS: Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direc*tion and to John Napier's sets and cos*tumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.)... **CITY OF ANGELS:** Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)... **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run turned thirty-one in May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.)... **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1991½:** This newly revised revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)... **FOREVER PLAID:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)... **GRAND HOTEL:** The *dazzling imagination of* Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)... **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of *this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo* novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)... **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.)... **ONCE ON THIS ISLAND:** An enchanting musical, set in the Caribbean, by Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)... **PERFECT CRIME:** A murder mystery by Warren Manzi. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401.)... **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)... **SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION:** You're best off knowing nothing about the John Guare play other than that it represents a perfect meeting of the playwright and the director Jerry Zaks. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. Kelly Bishop now has the lead. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

DANCE

LIKE many of Paul Taylor's works, his hour-long ballet about a fundamentalist community, "Speaking in Tongues," has a certain cultic tension in the theatre: it conveys the illusion that its sections are linked by a narrative that is nowhere specified but everywhere understood. In the new film version (to be telecast by Great Performances, on November 6), one finds a different sort of tension, in which the narrative aspects of the community's tortuous relationships are so strongly drawn that one wonders how such drama can be projected in terms that are indisputably those of dance. "Our goal was to make the film as immediate and riveting a piece of television as the dance is in the live theatre." That's the director, Matthew Diamond, talking from his film studio in California. "But the bad thing about film and television is that effects can never be instantaneous," he said. "You lose a certain risk of the theatre. The trade-off, however, can be that you're able to see the dance from a precise spot—tight in, from overhead, focussing on the whole stage, or just a hand, if that's what's most expressive."

He continued, "I was particularly concerned in the film with transitions between sections. In the theatre, it felt to me that what Paul had done had a certain quality that took for granted the viewers would stay in their seats, as they would in a movie. Television can't take that for granted. So the designer, Santo Loquasto, the lighting designer, Alan Adelman, and I discussed how the set could be reconceived to get people into little spaces or to change locations or light. In the only section of choreography that Paul added for the film—the Hayseed duet, with Chris Gillis and Denise Roberts—we wanted to reproduce the most beautiful time of day, the early morning, as a contrast with the horrible stuff that's going on in the bedroom."

What was Mr. Taylor's contribution to the process? "The shots are pretty much mine," Mr. Diamond said. "That is, the decisions about when to put a shot in or take it out, how to frame, and so forth. But I would say to him, 'Look, if I do this it will look like this. Do you like it?' And he'd say, 'Look what happens if I change this part of the movement.' And he would tweak and I would tweak and soon the process took on a life of its own. And I said to myself, 'Oh, now *I know why this is Paul Taylor.*' "

"Speaking in Tongues" will also be presented live by the Paul Taylor Dance Company, as part of its season at City Center, October 22 through November 3.

Paul Taylor Dance Company—In a two-week engagement. Oct. 22 at 7: "Airs," "Dust," and "Company B" (company première).... ¶ Oct. 23 at 8: "Esplanade," "Fact & Fancy" (New York première), and "Cloven Kingdom."... ¶ Oct. 24 at 8: "Aureole," "Icarus at Night" (première), and "Speaking in Tongues."... ¶ Oct. 25 at 8: "Sunset," "Nightshade," and "Company B."... ¶ Oct. 26 at 2: "Esplanade," "Fact & Fancy," and "Cloven Kingdom."... ¶ Oct. 26 at 8: "Aureole," "Icarus at Night," and "Speaking in Tongues."... ¶ Oct. 27 at 3: "Sunset," "Nightshade," and "Company B."... ¶ Oct. 27 at 7:30: "Dust," "Fact & Fancy," and "Company B."... ¶ Oct. 29 at 8: "Sunset," "Nightshade," and "Company B."... ¶ Oct. 30 at 8: "Aureole," "Icarus at Night," and "Speaking in Tongues." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Through Nov. 3.)

Jacob's Pillow's Men Dancers: The Ted Shawn Legacy—An eight-member company, directed by Robby Barnett, in works by Ted Shawn, José Limón, Stephen Petronio, Pilobolus, and others. With guest artists Stuart Hodes and Clay Taliaferro. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Oct. 22 at 7, Oct. 23-26 at 8, and Oct. 27 at 2 and 7:30.)

Pilar Rioja—Classical Spanish and flamenco dance. (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850. Oct. 22-25 at 8, Oct. 26 at 3, and Oct. 27 at 7.)

Stephanie Skura & Company—Presenting "The Bad Play," a dance/drama by Ms. Skura and the writer Ana Maria Simo. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Oct. 24-26 at 8 and Oct. 27 at 3. Through Nov. 3.)

Ballet Hispanico—Tina Ramirez's company in the opening performances of a two-week engagement. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Oct. 29-30 at 8. Through Nov. 10.)

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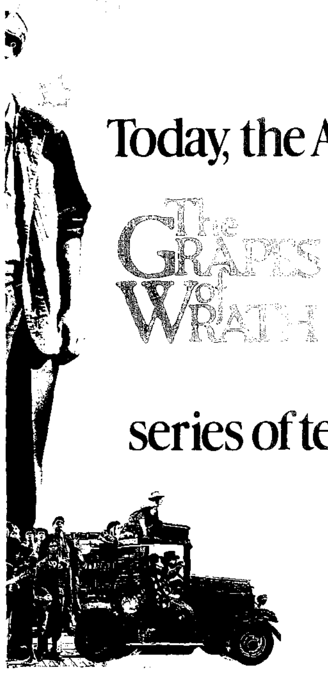
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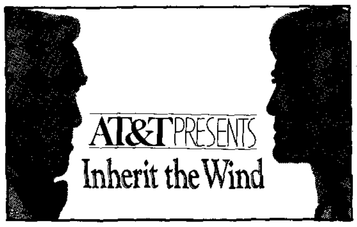
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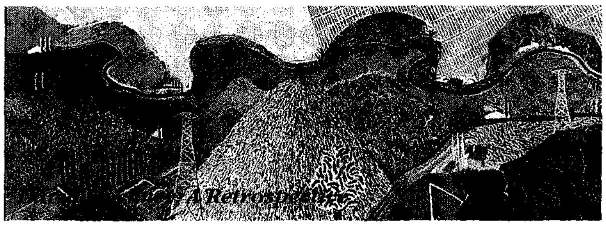
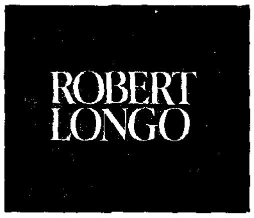

A Retrospective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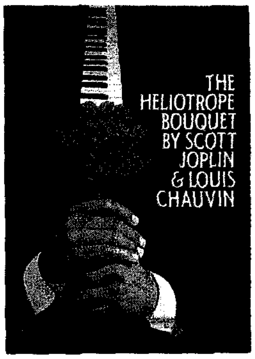
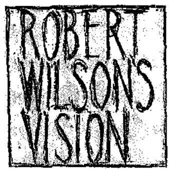

THE HELIOTROPE BOUQUET BY SCOTT JOPLIN & LOUIS CHAUVIN


ROBERT WILSON'S VISION

A Wonderful Life

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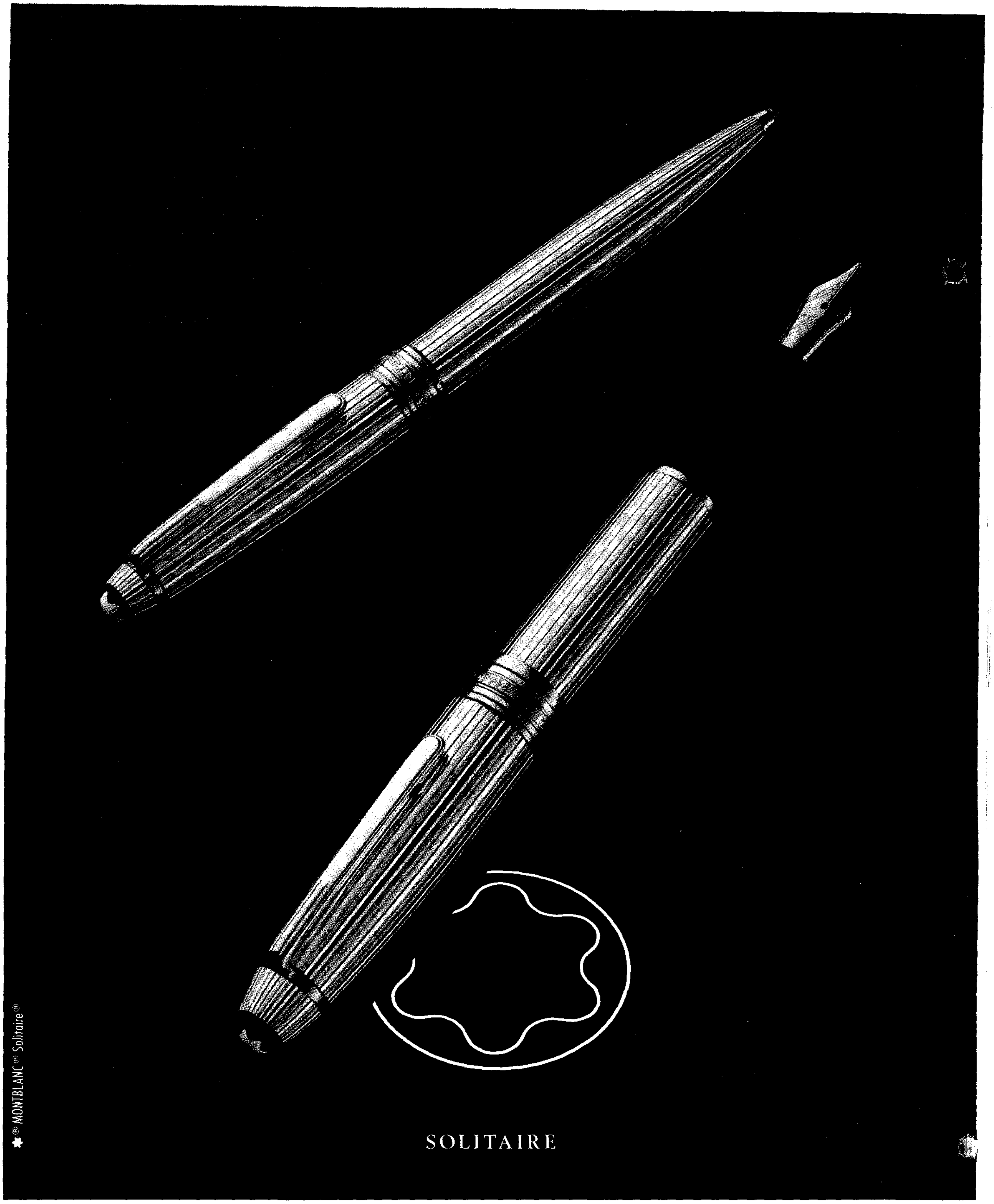
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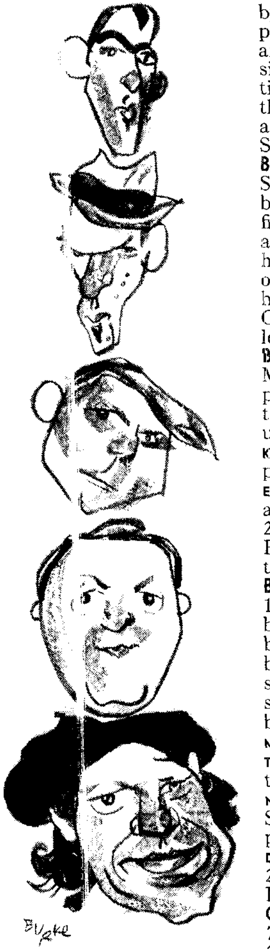
NIGHT LIFE

THERE is music so sombre that it lifts you up, and then there is music that takes you down and leaves you there. American Music Club belongs to one of these categories—you'll have to decide for yourself which. The band's latest album, "Everclear," is unapologetically bleak, but it boasts some remarkable songwriting and a ragged, atmospheric beauty. There's been a buzz about American Music Club in these parts for a while, but it's in England that the San Francisco-based group has really taken hold. In a sentence that only a British rock journalist could write, one *Melody Maker* scribe put it this way: "If a choice had to be made between the release of a new A.M.C. album and the entire remaining output of the record industry, I wouldn't even have to think about which I'd go for."

That's taking things a bit far, but there are plenty of pleasures to be found on "Everclear." Singer-songwriter Mark Eitzel has an urgent, early-Springsteen sort of voice and writes strange, searching, country-inflected songs. In the past, Eitzel has been a touch manic-depressive in concert, and the drama of the band's music has occasionally been eclipsed by another drama: whether or not the singer would have a nervous breakdown onstage. "I feel good about the songs I'm writing now," Eitzel recently told an *SF Weekly* reporter, "and I'm doing them a disservice if I don't play them well. . . . I'm not going to drink a six-pack onstage anymore; I'm not going to smash glasses against my head anymore. . . . It doesn't get me love, it doesn't get me money, it doesn't get me anything. So why do it? Why not just play the damn song?"

American Music Club appears at the Knitting Factory on October 23, and at Maxwell's on October 25.



American Music Club at the Knitting Factory and at Maxwell's

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute changes; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**JEFF HARNAR,** who'll be performing in the Oak Room as of Oct. 22, is a young singer with a lot of presence: a big voice, a big smile, and a big, overtly theatrical manner. His shows usually include old favorites and some nice musical surprises. During this run, Harnar will be offering "The Warner Brothers' Songbook." Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine-thirty, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—It's everything a cabaret should be: sleek, elegant, intimate, and slighty decadent. It also offers something that other cabarets do not: tapas, which come from the Spanish restaurant adjoining the club. **ANN HAMPTON CALLAWAY,** who's performing here just now, is a fine singer who can imitate Billie Holiday and Marlene Dietrich, sing an E-flat above high C, and say, without sounding immodest, "People often come up to me and ask why I'm not famous." Apart from a few requisite supper-club numbers, her set list usually includes her own songs, songs by lesser-known New York composers, and songs improvised around suggestions made by musically inclined patrons. Showtimes begin at nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at nine and eleven-fifteen Fridays and Saturdays.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—This blue-on-blue club is the place to find big-league jazz artists; it's an institution and it knows it: how many other clubs sell their own belt buckles? **RAY CHARLES** is here Oct. 22-27, with the Ray Charles Orchestra and the Raeletts. Music from nine. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone cries uncle. Highlights this week: **LEO KOTTKE** and **MAURA O'CONNELL** appear on Oct. 23; the **CHICK COREA ELEKTRIC BAND** is here Oct. 24-25; and **JUNE TABOR** comes in on Oct. 29. Shows at eight and eleven. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar where, if your neighbors coöperate, you can hear the beautiful, singular sound of musicians thinking. A quartet consisting of pianist **DANILO PEREZ,** bassist **SANTI DEBRIANO,** flutist **MAURICIO SMITH,** and drummer **TOMMY CAMPBELL** holds forth through Oct. 27 (on Oct. 22-25, **NESTOR TORRES** fills in for Mr. Smith). Pianist **JOHN HICKS,** saxophonist **GARY BARTZ,** and bassist **DAVID WILLIAMS** start up on Oct. 28. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—Until Oct. 26, the pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is home to **KAREN AKERS.** Ms. Akers, an introspective balladeer with a refined, smoky alto, is also an actress, whose Broadway credits include "Nine" and "Grand Hotel." Her show here includes material from her new album, "Unchained Melody." **BOBBY SHORT** begins a two-month engagement on Oct. 29. Shows Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans' Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays. This is Carroll's fourteenth season at the Carlyle and earlier this month she released a live album that she recorded here and that includes standards by Kern, Arlen, Bernstein, and Gershwin, as well as one original called "Barbara's Carol."

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—The city's most famed rock club, a dark, narrow cave with neon-beer-sign stalactites and ancestral graffiti, is part sacred burial ground and part historic landmark, but it hasn't succumbed to nostalgia: new and used bands of every stripe continue to pass through nightly. **FOLLOW FOR NOW,** who'll be here on Oct. 30, is a young Atlanta band who just came out with its first record. The album begins with a distorted guitar trill that must be a reference to Hendrix and moves through hard-core funk, sixties-style, positive-message rock, and a sort of rock-rap hybrid. Onstage, the group covers all of the above territory, and, somehow or other, it all makes sense. Music from nine Sundays through Thursdays and from nine-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

CONDON'S, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—In the shadow of the Zeckendorf Towers sits this stucco-walled grotto, whose intimate scale makes it a fine spot for jazz. **ARCHIE SHEPP** is here Oct. 22-27; **ABBEY LINCOLN** starts up on Oct. 29. Show times Tuesdays through Sundays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty; Fridays and Saturdays, also at one.

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE, 25 Third Ave., at St. Marks Pl. (529-6924)—Young, loud, and rude. N.Y.U. students like it here, as do punks, weekend punks, and anyone with a taste for rough-and-tumble garage-rock music. There's not a lot to look at—except the band and your fellow-patrons. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at ten, Fridays at midnight, and Saturdays at eleven.

DIVA, 306 E. 81st St. (650-1928)—A newly hatched restaurant and piano bar. It's a brick-walled room that offers Italian fare and, Tuesdays through Saturdays, the musings of pianist **CHARLES DE FOREST.** Music from eight-thirty. Closed Sundays.

EAGLE TAVERN, 355 W. 14th St. (924-0275)—An Irish bar, way out on the Western edge of town, where the great potholed boulevards turn to cobblestones, and the world across the Hudson flashes its come-hither signs. The back room has Hibernian sounds on Fridays and bluegrass on Saturdays. Sets at nine and eleven.

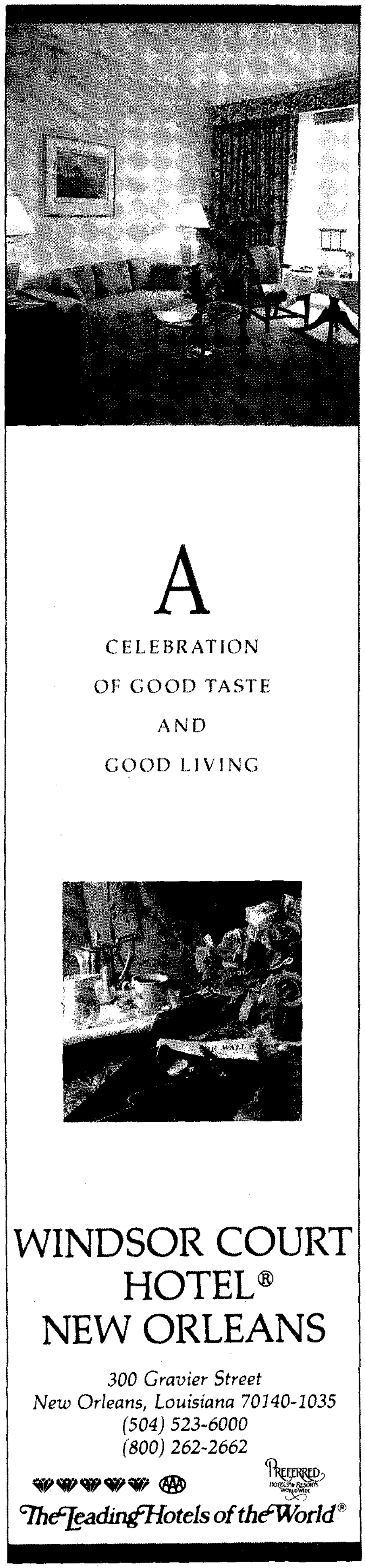
EIGHTY EIGHT'S, 228 W. 10th St. (924-0088)—The voluble singer **SYLVIA SYMS** finishes up her run in this small cabaret on Oct. 25-26 at eight-thirty, and on Oct. 27 at four. Comedian **JULIE HALSTON,** who holds forth on Oct. 24 at ten-thirty, recently did a wicked, whose-show-is-this-anyway turn in Charles Busch's play "Red Scare on Sunset." Her standup act is a wonderful, ostensibly autobiographical bull session about a woman with two warring natures (that of "a good Catholic schoolgirl" and that of "a flamboyant gay Jewish man"), a woman who is, in her own words, "divorced, over thirty, and hormonally imbalanced." Halston, who has long, wheeling arms and wears a shimmering blond wig with a poodle-esque flip, can be funny simply reading wedding announcements from the *Times*.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A frat house for the avant-garde. In some ways, the club doesn't really belong in New York: the cover charge is too reasonable, the management is too laid back, the audiences are too polite. It's a slice of postcollegiate counterculture that somehow landed on Houston Street, of all places. The music is another story—much of the time, it exemplifies urban angst. **AMERICAN MUSIC CLUB** will be here on Oct. 23; **WILLEM BREUKER KOLLEKTIEF** comes in Oct. 24-25; and the **POLANSKYS** and the **MAUDLINS** appear on Oct. 26. Music after nine.

LONE STAR ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—The club's dining room, where bands hold sway, features a Wright Brothers-era airplane suspended from the ceiling, a dance floor where you can kick up some dust, and a balcony for quiet types. **MICHELLE SHOCKED,** who'll be appearing here on Oct. 24, should not be missed, particularly when she's stopping over in a club this small. Both of Shocked's records—the folky, evocative "Short, Sharp, Shocked" and the punchy, jazzy "Captain Swing"—are exceptional efforts. Onstage, Shocked is surprisingly sunny and jokey and limber. She has a new record called "Halfway to Arkansas," which includes collaborations with Pop Staples, Hothouse Flowers, and Taj Mahal, and she'll be showcasing her new songs here. Music after nine. Dining.

MARQUEE, 547 W. 21st St. (929-3257)—A rock club that is one of the city's main venues for college-radio fare. **TRIP SHAKESPEARE,** who'll be here on Oct. 30, is a remarkable Minneapolis-based psychedelic-pop quartet The band has just put out its second major-label album, "Lulu," and it's just about impossible to stop listening to it—it *is* a lulu. Three or four songs sound like instant classics, and in a world awash in sampling and twenty-four-track tinkering, it's one of those rare, swinging five-star albums that might come across even better live. **INNOCENCE MISSION** and Gin Blossoms are also on the bill. Music begins around nine.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—A good sound system, cheap drinks, and a regular-guy atmosphere make this restaurant-bar, home of the Hoboken Sound and of the phrase "jangly guitars," a popular hangout for musicians and their followers. **FIREHOSE** is here on Oct. 23. The group, a reincarnation of the seminal San Pedro, California, band the Minutemen—Firehose formed in 1986, shortly after the death of Minuteman guitarist D. Boon—has just released a new album, "Flyin' the Flan-



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NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

nel,'' which finds them as jolting and quirky as ever. **AMERICAN MUSIC CLUB** is here on Oct. 25, and the **NEIGHBORHOODS** come in on Oct. 26.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—What Cole Porter might have called a regal eagle's nest. **LESLEY GORE,** whose 1963 hit "It's My Party'' made her a very, very famous sixteen-year-old, is at work here through Oct. 26. Gore has not appeared in New York for over a decade and her performances are sure to include the aforementioned number, as well as the hits "Judy's Turn to Cry'' and "You Don't Own Me.'' Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

RITZ, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—This decaying theatre was once the famous Studio 54, where the late Steve Rubell's henchmen helped popularize the policy of turning away the unbeautiful. Now it's home of one of the city's biggest, oldest, and loudest rock clubs. The place features a broad stage, mobile-home-size speakers, plenty of room to shimmy, and, for the sedentary, a gigantic Big Brother video screen. This week, **SONIC YOUTH** and **JOHN ZORN** head up a bill on Oct. 26, and the **KENTUCKY HEADHUNTERS** come in on Oct. 30. The latter is a seventies-style Southern-rock band that's received an extraordinary amount of acclaim lately. The band's live shows are fun and ornery, but ultimately the whole package seems pretty familiar. Music at eight.

RUSSIAN TEA ROOM, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—**STEVE ROSS,** who'll be performing in the small, red-gold-and-green cabaret on Oct. 27, is a nimble and pleasing singer-pianist who specializes in the transatlantic chatter of Noël Coward and Cole Porter. Ross's physical resemblance to Porter, which has often been commented upon, as well as his sly, chummy manner, give his performances a nicely old-fashioned cast. Shows Sundays at eight and, upon demand, ten-thirty. Dining and, of course, drinking.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—This former luncheonette has a tropical motif—straw huts, bamboo, a fake palm tree—and one of the city's more international booking policies: Brazil, Africa, and the Caribbean are just a few of the places explored. **GIL SCOTT-HERON** will be here on Oct. 23; **COMPA** appears on Oct. 25; the **BHUNDU BOYS** appear on Oct. 26; and **BAD MANNERS** appear on Oct. 29. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from ten Fridays and Saturdays. Closed Sundays.

TRAMPS, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—A roller-rink-size bar-and-restaurant devoted to solid rock and blues. **MARSHALL CRENSHAW** comes in on Oct. 29; appearing with him will be **SYD STRAW,** among others.

VILLAGE GATE, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—By now, you've no doubt heard of the weirdness currently in progress downstairs: "The Real Live Game Show'' and "The Real Live Brady Bunch,'' both of which are exactly what they claim to be. One flight up, in the Terrace Bar, the **GAIL WYNTERS** trio is at work Wednesdays through Sundays. Music from ten.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless, wedge-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. The décor is homey and a little faded, like an attic full of memorabilia. The **PHAROAH SANDERS** quartet is here through Oct. 27; the **SHIRLEY HORN** trio begins work on Oct. 29. Mondays are reserved for the **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA.** Music after nine-thirty.

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Two floors of no-nuke veggie entertainment and consciousness-raising. Listen to bands play *in the Summer of Love*-muralled back room; buy a tie-dyed T-shirt at the Volkswagen-bus curio shop; catch up on current events at the bulletin board and community calendar. Or, if you'd rather just be mellow, crash out in the basement hippie love pad. Music at ten.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were no music. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. The **VANESSA RUBIN** trio performs on Oct. 27, and **GENE BERTONCINI** leads a trio as of Oct. 28. Music from eight.

ASCENT

The next two weekends are the last chance—for two years, at least—to explore the interior of the Memorial Arch in Brooklyn's Grand Army Plaza. After November 3, the arch will be closed to visitors for extensive roof reconstruction. Il vaut le voyage, *in Michelin parlance—this is one of the city's most uplifting (literally: there are a hundred and three steps to climb) experiences. At the summit, the visitor has a breathtaking bird's-eye view of Prospect Park (where fall is beginning to announce itself); such Brooklyn landmarks as the Montauk Club, the Williamsburgh Savings Bank, and Queen of All Saints Church; and a Manhattan skyline that could have inspired Thomas Wolfe's description of the city as a "million-footed, tower-masted citadel." Nearly within arm's reach of the visitor is the patinated sculptural group by Frederick MacMonnies which crowns the arch, with the heroic figure of Columbia brandishing her sword behind a team of four horses (modelled after those of San Marco) and flanked by two angels.*

Along the way to the roof, an exhibition, sponsored by the Prospect Park Alliance and organized by Mariella Bisson, the park's director of visual art, is on view. Inspired by Columbia, five artists have created arresting site-specific works, which are located on the ground floor and on the three landings of the spiral staircase.

Columbia, Ms. Bisson explained, is often mistaken for the Winged Victory (her unfurling flag taken to be wings). "Columbia was an invented American goddess," she said, "a symbol of the nation, before Uncle Sam deposed her, around 1911. Sometimes, when my job makes me nuts," she added, "I come up here just to look at her."

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

FOR four days, it poured so hard in Miami that the locals talked about how a hurricane might be a relief. The torrents eventually slowed and the big storm never came, but Miamians better brace themselves anyway. The city is about to explode. Ever since Labor Day, New Yorkers have come blasting through the airport each weekend as if the first five hundred people to buy two Absolut-and-tonics would get free hotel accommodations. Angelenos desperate for more rewarding nocturnal playgrounds used to routinely fly to New York; they now have a different transcontinental destination.

Why? The warm rays may attract woolgathering New Yorkers, but Southern Californians hardly need more sun. The economics of vacationing down here are undeniably attractive, but that's not the lure, either. What's far more seductive is the attitude of Gold Coast city kids. They have neither qualms nor hesitations about going out. And they never make excuses. Their relatives aren't in town, they weren't just in the neighborhood, and they all have cars, so none of them were brought there at gunpoint. In short, they suffer no symptoms of that dread New York/L.A. malady, Club Guilt. Young Miami is out because it wants to be. And new spaces here give them plenty of room.

Club Boomerang has three rooms decorated in Schnabel baroque, plus a decked back yard larger than Rex overlooking a banyan-flanked inlet of the Intercoastal. Décor-wise, we saw posters for movies like "Three Bad Girls," as well as slides of Jackie O. and women in dishabille projected onto the walls and reflecting off nearby buildings (the neighbors do not even get free-drink tickets).

Garage, which opened this summer, shows an even greater excess of trashy imagination. It is possibly the most spectacular environment anyone has opened since the Palladium. As dilapidated as the 14th Street extravaganza is lavish, the Garage looks like Radio City Music Hall transfigured for the Rocky Horror Show. Plastic-cocooned walkways abound, and Brobdingnagian papier-maché dolls and auto-and-body parts (from mannequins) are strewn everywhere.

Five more clubs are scheduled to open in Miami before the end of October. There's not a pothole or a smog cloud in sight. As for other attractions, a happy Boomeranger squealed, "I found five stores today selling rubber hot pants." St. Bart's, eat your shorts out.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Next Wave Festival—Oct. 23 at 7 and Oct. [illegible]5-26 at 8: "Carmen Miranda," a celebration of Brazilian music, with Arto Lindsay, Elza Soares, and Bebel Gilberto, and commentary by Laurie Anderson and Nana Vasconcelos. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. The festival continues through Dec. 7.)

"Spic-O-Rama"—John Leguizamo tries out new material. (Gas Station, Ave. B and 2nd St. Oct. 24 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the performance.)

Dario D'Ambrosi—A performance artist from Italy, in "Volare," which is about a survivor of a plane crash. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Oct. 24-27 at 8. Through Nov. [illegible].)

"Burp: Soup and Tart Revisited"—Short performances by Nam June Paik, Molissa Fenley, Ann Carlson, JoAnne Akalaitis, Christian Marclay, Edwin Lee Tyler, and others. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Oct. [illegible]4 at 8:30.)

Lenora Champagne—Presenting "With You the Rest of..." (a new work), Oct. 24-26 at [illegible], and "Isabella Dreams the New World" (a reprise from last year), Oct. 27 at 5. (Downtown Art Co., 64 E. 4th St. For information about tickets, call 979-7362.)

"Atomic Opera"—With a cast that includes the following characters: Kate Smith, dancing physicists, Robert Oppenheimer, bathing beauties, and a couple of housewives. Directed by Kevin Malony. (Ohio Theatre, 6[illegible] Wooster St. Oct. 25-30 at 8:30. For information about tickets, call 924-0077.)

Meredith Monk—Presenting a film, "16 Millimeter Earrings," from 1966, and two live performances. (The program begins in the World Financial Center's Lecture Room, 22[illegible] Liberty St., and continues in the Winter Garden, Battery Park City. Oct. 26-27 at 6. No tickets necessary.)

P.S. 122—Oct. 24-27 at 8: Peggy Pettitt... ¶Oct. 27 at 9: Eric Bogosian. (150 First Ave. at 9th St. 477-5288).

ART

IN *Artforum* ten years ago, the critic Edit deAk introduced readers to Francesco Clemente's work in an article titled "A Chameleon in a State of Grace." The artist appeared to fit this description to a T. His lines seemed to slither across the paper, from surface to surface; he shed one medium for another, slipped from one level of pictorial pitch to the next. What's more, his polymorphously sexual and scatological imagery suggested the heated imaginings of a latter-day *poète maudit* and the cooler Tantric sublimities of the East. All this impossible elegance has for the most part remained true of Clemente over the years, even if his work has been erratic enough to sometimes evoke thrift-store painting and sometimes Redon and other dandified Blakean symbolists.

Clemente's current show, his first at the Gagosian gallery (980 Madison Avenue, at 76th Street; through November 16), suggests a tightening up. The paintings—all of them on canvas and most quite small, as many artists' are these days—are chunkily solid little affairs, though their hothouse atmospheres remain inviolate. Self-portraits, for instance, continue to be abundant, and an enterprising inventory of breasts, testicles, eyes, mouths, and noses continues to animate Clemente's pullulating, narcissistic, and hermaphroditic beast. Scraped-down reds, terra-cottas, pinks, and blacks dominate the scene here. A feverishly symbiotic relationship between image and ground recalls post-war paintings by Arshile Gorky, William Baziotes, and, here and there, Rufino Tamayo. Interestingly, the hint of a hard-nosed Mexican accent seems to be nudging Clemente's more characteristic fey Indian inflections out of the picture.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

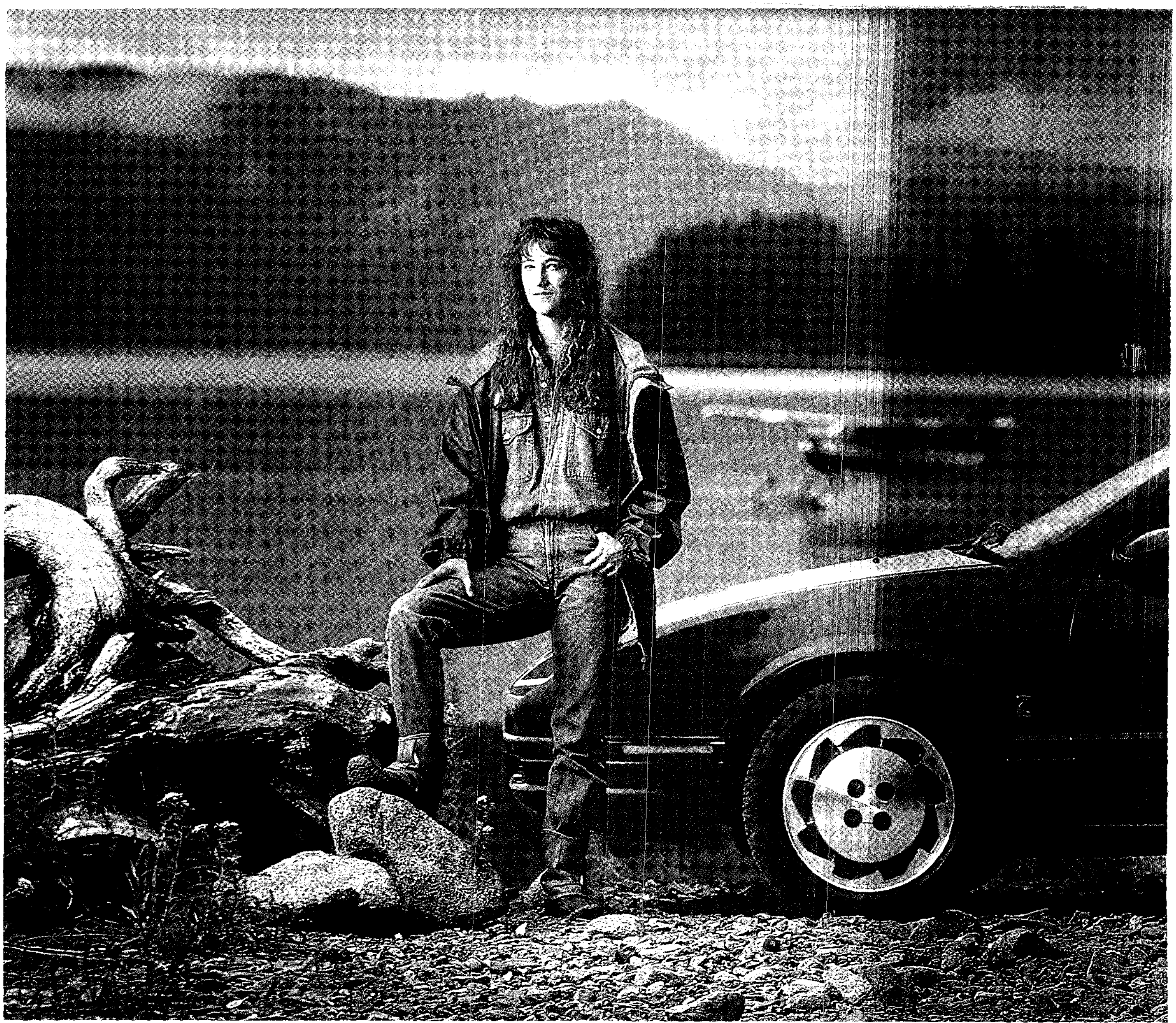
Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Seurat." A centenary exhibition of more than two hundred paintings and drawings by the Pointillist. Through Jan. 12.... ¶ "Neo-Impressionism: The Friends and Followers of Georges Seurat," best taken as a kind of appetizer before the main course, consists of eighty-eight paintings, drawings, and watercolors by Paul Signac, Camille Pissarro, Henri Matisse, and many others. Through Jan. 12.... ¶ A selection of a hundred and fifty American watercolors from the museum's collection. Through Dec 10.... ¶ Sixteenth-century Italy will take up permanent residence in a new installation of sculptures, furniture, tapestries, and much more that reveals the influence of Leonardo, Raphael, and Michelangelo.... ¶ "Resplendence of the Spanish Monarchy" is a display of sixteenth-century Flemish tapestries, along with German and Italian armor. Through Jan. 5.... ¶ A small show of twenty-nine nineteenth-century European photographs, by such artists as Le Gray, Baldus, and Nadar. Through Dec. 1.... ¶ "The Lotus Transcendent" is a display of about two hundred small sculptures from Thailand, Cambodia, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.... **Note:** The museum's roof garden, planted with nine sculptures by Rodin, is open when the weather permits. Through Oct. 27. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Pleasures and Terrors of Domestic Comfort" explores the contemporary photographer's supposed preoccupation with the life of the home in more than a hundred and fifty works by Nan Goldin, William Eggleston, Cindy Sherman, Tina Barney, and others. Through Dec. 31.... ¶ "*Dis*locations" includes seven installations (some of them large-scale interiors) spread throughout the museum and designed to test viewers' habits of observation, by Louise Bourgeois, Chris Burden, Sophie Calle, David Hammons, Ilya Kabakov, Bruce Nauman, and Adrian Piper. Through Jan. 7.... ¶ The annual "New Photography" series presents recent work by Eberhard Grames, Sheron Rupp, and Stephen A. Scheer. Through Jan. 7.... ¶ An installation in the "Projects" series by Guillermo Kuitca. Kuitca's installation is not an installation in the currently fashionable sense, which is refreshing—especially given the microclimate of the "Projects" room. Maps—of the area around Odessa, for example, where Kuitca's grandparents were from—have been a frequent refrain in the artist's work, as has the recurring blueprint of a four-room house. On view, for instance, are three of Kuitca's paintings with the house-plan motif, one of which appears to be weeping. There is also a group of five foreshortened, freestanding cots, with maps painted on their mattresses. What is most engaging about Kuitca is his tentative quality. His work is emotionally delicate even when confessional, and when it's political it remains personal as well. Through Oct. 29.... ¶ An exhibition of models, drawings, and photographs illuminates the work of the Japanese architect Tadao Ando. Through Dec. 31.... ¶ Forty helmets and masks made in the twentieth century. Through Nov. 19.... ¶ A small show of videotapes made with inexpensive video equipment by such artists as William Wegman, Linda Montano, George Kuchar, and Sadie Benning. Through Nov. 10. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Ralph Humphrey

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until early 1992.

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—Unlike most artists who have died of AIDS, Scott Burton, it seems, had enough time to make mature work. This show of the last works he designed, which were fabricated after his death, indicates that this master of functional sculpture was headed in a curious and unanticipated direction. In the post-minimal seventies, Burton cleverly implied a human presence in his exquisite, modernistic sculptures in the form of chairs and tables. These last furniture sculptures are literally figurative: a pair of cherry "Guardian Cabinets" with mirror-like bronze heads, a Chac-Moolesque granite "Bench Goddess," and a stainless-steel "Slave Table" in the form of a crawling man. The sphinxian arrangement of the sculptures here recalls the artist's performance works, and is rich with both childlike fantasy and sadistic suggestion. Through Dec. 8.... ¶ "You Connect the Dots...," an oddly academic video installation by Bill Beirne, involves a video camera that visitors can manipulate by means of a remote-control device to scan the street scene around the museum; videotaped reënactments of fragmented conversations the artist overheard in front of the museum; and fragments of audiotaped docent tours inside the museum. The issues of surveillance, con-



If ROBIN MILLAGE paid much attention to conventional wisdom, she wouldn't be standing where she is today.

Petersburg, Alaska, is a tiny fishing village on an island off the coast of northern British Columbia. And for Robin Millage, it was nothing more than a vacation destination, until she saw it and decided to stay. You see, Robin's a bit of an adventurer.

Which may be why she recently bought a brand new Saturn, sight unseen, from a retailer in Spokane, Washington, and had it shipped 2500 miles to the village.

©1991 Saturn Corporation. Robin Millage is pictured with a 1992 Saturn SL2.

According [illegible] couple of people do that.

But Robin [illegible] a car she could trust. A car that was easy to service. Plus, a car that wasn't going to leave her alone in the woods. And everything she read pointed to a Saturn.

Of course, Robin's an exception. And we realize that everybody isn't going to just pick up and move to some pristine island in Alaska and buy a Saturn.

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So why do you suppose there are two on the island now?

A DIFFERENT KIND *of* COMPANY. A DIFFERENT KIND *of* CAR.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

trol, and interpretation are surprisingly banal here. The most interesting aspect of the installation is a series of piles of books selected by various docents as being particularly influential to their thinking. There the mind is allowed to wander. Through Nov. 10. . . . ¶ "American Life in American Art." Second floor through Nov. 10; third floor through Jan. 5. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Whitney Museum Branches—"Immaterial Objects." The Whitney's permanent collection is particularly strong in the non-traditional works that in many ways defined the aesthetic upheaval of the late sixties and seventies. But owing at least in part to their scale, these important benchmarks are rarely on view. At first it might seem unwieldy to have an exhibition spread out over three locations, but this in fact turns out to be one of this excellent show's strengths. Each venue captures a different perspective. At the Equitable Center (through Dec. 28) are, mostly, pieces which are self-contained, calm, and ordered—Mel Bochner's circle of pebbles, a charming conceptual play on literalness and representation, James Turrell's enigmatic light projection, Carl Andre's copper-plate path, Dan Flavin's grid of neon-light tubes, Richard Serra's emphatic black drawing, and even, in a curious way, Eva Hesse's tangle of knotted rope and Richard Tuttle's wrinkled canvas octagon. The installation at Federal Reserve Plaza (through Nov. 16) is, by contrast, alive and animated, and verges, even when ordered, on chaos. Here we find Dennis Oppenheim's *mannequin* comically lecturing on the systematic murder of the sixties avant-garde; Bruce Nauman's pile of burlap, which is about as concise a protest against formalism as has yet been raised; Barry Le Va's anti-illusionistic scatterings of felt and broken glass; Ree Morton's mixed-media "Signs of Love," a bold feminist parody of sentimentality in art; and Jonathan Borofsky's crowd of running men painted on a wall. In this company, even Robert Irwin's illuminated disk becomes energy unleashed. At Philip Morris (through Nov. 16), Mary Lucier's video installation "Ohio at Giverny" is the best use of this dreary space we have ever seen. (**Whitney Museum at Equitable Center,** Seventh Ave. at 52nd St. Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 7:30; Saturdays, noon to 5. . . . **Whitney Museum Downtown,** 33 Maiden Lane. Open Mondays through Fridays, 11 to 6. . . . **Whitney Museum at Philip Morris,** Park Ave. at 42nd St. Open Mondays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 7:30.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Sigmar Polke." In overcompensating for its belated recognition of this major German artist's importance, the American market has come dangerously close to overhyping Polke. This mid-career retrospective, however, despite some big problems—the absence of films, for one—comes as a pleasant surprise. It begins in the mid-sixties, with works that clearly stood in the shadow of contemporaneous American art and were well aware of the fact, often resulting in an essentially good-natured parody of minimal and Conceptual art, which is nevertheless underscored by a certain resignation to the hegemony. There is a bewildering and unexplained ten-year gap, right in the middle of the artist's career (essentially spanning the seventies)—no small hole in a show that covers less than three decades. When the exhibition does resume, with early-eighties work, the trickster in Polke returns with a vengeance, teasing with one hand while stroking with the other. From this period come the finest paintings of Polke's career, including the symphonic "Paganini" and the haunting "The Camp"—the latter portraying both the concentration camps and the division of Germany by means of two rows of barbed wire with blackness in between. The so-called "mood" paintings of 1982, whose colors reflect changes in the weather, are rich with painterly pathos. And the most recent paintings, from 1988, are quite simply awesome. Through Jan. 5. . . . ¶ "Objects of Myth and Memory." A fascinating exhibition of two hundred and fifty of the nine thousand objects purchased at the beginning of the century by Stewart Culin, the curator responsible for the museum's fine Native American, Asian, and African collections. These objects have not been on view since the thirties. Some of them are exquisite: a group of extraordinary Mimbres stone figures; a charming Zuni fetish in the form of a bear; a number of haunting kachina dolls. But this is more a study of the systematic collection of artifacts and Culin's ethnographic drive than of the cultures themselves, and the works are accompanied by detailed texts about the purchase of many of the objects. What are most engaging are not the treasures, of which there are a number, but the objects of daily life: games, clothes, pots, baskets, belt buckles, rattles, and hats. Through Dec. 29. . . . ¶ A companion show of contemporary Native American works, including ceramics, elk-horn carvings, and Pomo baskets. Through Jan. 27. . . . ¶ A thirty-foot-long platform of forged-iron sculptures is the fifteenth installment in Alain Kirili's "Commandment" series. Through Jan. 5. . . . ¶ "Quattrocento," a small exhibition of a few dozen early-Renaissance panel paintings from Italy. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

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American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—In a "living exhibit," four monks from Tibet will demonstrate over the course of five weeks their ancient craft of dollmaking. This involves clay-modelling, painting, appliqué, and tailoring, and about twenty elaborate dolls will be made. Through Nov. 8. . . . ¶ A show of photographs by Heinrich Harrer, taken in Tibet during the last few years before the Chinese invasion, in 1951. Through Nov. 8. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—A show of sixty ukiyo-e prints and books that explores the relationship between the works, the artists, and censorship in Tokugawa Japan (1615-1868). Through Jan. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Friday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.)

China Institute, 125 E. 65th St.—"Early Chinese Ceramics from New York State Museums" includes forty-eight earthenware, porcelain, and stoneware objects from around 3500 B.C. to the latter half of the thirteenth century. Through Dec. 14. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St.—Sixty-eight early ukiyo-e prints and paintings. Through Nov. 24. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—The library has reopened with greatly improved interior spaces. The Morgan House (at 37th and Madison) has been purchased and a glass-enclosed garden court constructed to connect the two buildings. The permanent collection is now given three new gallery spaces and is shown off in "Masterpieces of the Morgan Library." Through Jan. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The French children's-book character Babar the Elephant travels to New York in the form of more than a hundred drawings and watercolors by Jean de Brunhoff, the character's creator, and his son Laurent, who has continued the stories. Through Nov. 3. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—"The Interrupted Life." There are only a few good works of art in this show about death, most notably two silk-screen paintings made by Andy Warhol almost thirty years ago. Warhol's montage of four grieving Jackie Kennedys and his electric chair have become icons of America's obsession with celebrity and of its equation of justice with death. Much of the remaining work in this ambitious but somewhat misdirected display is concerned with a sensationalistic view of death—cadavers, autopsies, and the like. Apart from the Warhols, the most affecting works are the documentary ones—anonymous nineteenth-century family photographs of dead loved ones, many posed as if they were alive. Through Dec. 29. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"While They Fought: The Homefront in New York City" includes many posters, photographs (one shows Kate Smith surrounded by sailors), and artifacts from the Second World War. . . . ¶ Forty watercolors of New York and New Jersey landscapes by William Rickarby Miller (1818-93). Through Nov. 17. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, 11 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—Merlin, Mordred, Gawain, and Galahad leap off every page and out of every print on view in "King Arthur: Looking at the Legend." Through Feb. 22. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall. Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.) . . ¶ A hundred and fifty German Expressionist prints and books—mostly from the period 1910-30—by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Käthe Kollwitz, Wassily Kandinsky, George Grosz, and others. Through Jan. 4. (Third Floor Gallery. Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 7:30; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.) . . ¶ "Documents of Dissent," a show of books, posters, handbills, and journals from China, Tibet, the Soviet Union, the United States, and other countries. Included are the first English translation of "The Gulag Archipelago," the "Black Book of Polish Censorship," and posters by the collaborative group Guerrilla Girls. (Edna Barnes Salomon Room. Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

Queens Museum of Art, Flushing Meadow Park—"Closet No. 9," by Kenny Scharf, is one of the artist's surreal Day-Glo environments, incorporating paintings, customized appliances, and industrial materials. Starts Oct. 22. . . . ¶ Fifty photographs, by Reginald Marsh, that depict New York's subways and Coney Island, and that were used by the artist as studies for his better-known paintings and drawings. Through Nov. 10. . . . ¶ Christian Boltanski's mixed-media installation "Les Bougies" ("The Candles") incorporates metal, light fixtures, and mounted photographs. Through Nov. 2. . . . ¶ "Sylvia Plachy's Unguided Tour" is a collection of a hundred and twenty-five of the photographer's works. Through Nov. 2. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—Sixty-three narrative canvases painted by Jacob Lawrence between 1938 and 1940. Through Nov. 10. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Short List—**richmond burton,** Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. (through Nov. 30); **jack bush** and **alfred maurer,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. (open Mondays, through Nov. 9); **rackstraw downes,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. (open Mondays, through Nov. 16); **alan feltus,** Forum, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. (through O[illegible] 26); **nancy fried,** Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. (through Nov. 2); **nancy graves,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through Oct. 31); **cleve gray,** Berry-Hill, 11 E. 70th St. (open Mondays, through Nov. 9); **nancy grossman,** Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St. (through Nov. 9); **marino marini,** Kent, 47 E. 63rd St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through Dec. 20); **reuben nakian,** Kouros, 23 E. 73rd St. (through Nov. 2); **ignacio zuloaga,** Wildenstein, 19 E. 64th St. (a benefit, admission three dollars; open Mondays, closed Saturdays; through Nov. 8).

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Michael Young—"Predella of Difference." The predella itself is a big, wraparound frieze made up of gritty, almost Hofmannesque patches of gorgeous earth tones. The indi-

Was he a scoundrel… or a saint?

James Michael Curley began life in the slums of Boston. Smart and ambitious, he charmed his way to four terms as mayor, four as congressman and one as governor of Massachusetts. To the city's Irish immigrants, he was a saint. To others he was a scoundrel who used political influence for his own gain. He was regularly investigated for corruption, and ran one campaign for mayor from jail. He won. Fifty years later he interrupted a mayoral term to do time in a federal penitentiary. And still the people thought of him as their champion. At his funeral, thousands turned out to salute a great charmer – and, many say, an incorrigible crook.

Watch *Scandalous Mayor* on *The American Experience*, hosted by David McCullough.

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ART—Cont'd

vidual paintings hung above it recall Suprematism, along with other, often theosophically inspired manifestations of early-modern abstraction. Young's subtle, seductive, resin-coated paintings suggest softly geometric escutcheons. Crosses are one lietmotiv and seem to connote an existential as well as a topographical system. Young has been working almost entirely with found pigments, a varied chromatic array of muddy and sandy earth that he's bagged while travelling. He is sifting his way into the great tradition of romantic naturalism. Through Nov. 2. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Short List—**WILL BARNET,** Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 6); **LEONARD BASKIN,** Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Oct. 26); **ROMARE BEARDEN,** ACA, 41 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 26); **LOUISE BOURGEOIS,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through Nov. 16); **PAUL BROWN,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through Nov. 2); **POL BURY,** Herstand, 24 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Nov. 9); **ELAINE DE KOONING,** Washburn, 41 E. 57th St. (through Nov. 2); **NICOLA DE MARIA,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 30); **EDWIN DICKINSON,** Babcock, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Nov. 8); **JEAN HELION,** Adler, 41 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 26); **HANS HOFMANN,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through Nov. 16); **ALEX KATZ,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Nov. 2); **KIM MAC CONNEL** and **PETER HUTCHINSON,** Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through Nov. 2); **CONRAD MARCA-RELLI,** Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St. (through Nov. 9); **JOHN OPPER** and **MAX BECKMANN,** Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Oct. 26); **REBECCA PURDUM,** Tilton, 24 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 16); **WALLACE PUTNAM,** Ross, 50 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 9); **MATTHEW RADFORD,** Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. (through Oct. 29); **MARK TOBEY,** Daverio, 41 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 26); **MARGUERITE ZORACH,** Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Nov. 2).

GALLERIES—SoHo

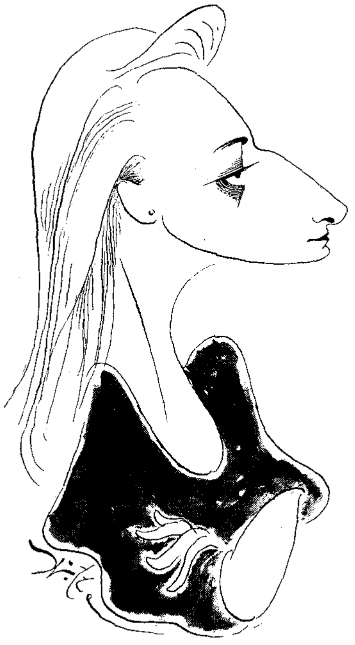
Dotty Attie—A show of narrative paintings, on tile-size canvases, containing beautifully painted details lifted from a variety of European and American works. A link between first- and second-generation feminists, Attie presents a woman's view of male bonding. In a series based on Fantin-Latour's "A Studio in the Batignolles Quarter," she spins several yarns that read like "grampa remembers" but have a strong subtext of sexual desire and colonial conquest. Through Oct. 26. (P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway.)

Michael Banicki / Kevin Wolff—Since the collapse of the modernist canon, in the late sixties, many artists have been attracted to rigid systems for the form of their art. This young Chicagoan turns this ethos on its head, "Cuckoo's Nest" style. He has extended his maniacal color-coded rating system to include a grid of a thousand bottle caps and photographs of a thousand storefronts rated, like beauty-pageant contestants, according to eight different criteria. / A group of mysteriously harsh, soft-focus paintings of double images of forearms. Through Oct. 26. (Feature, 484 Broome St.)

Stephen Ellis / Charles Long—A tough grouping of strong nonobjective paintings that owe a debt to Marden and Mondrian. Each of the works is quite different in mood. One, in orange and black, is skillfully deceptive. From afar it looks raw and scratchy, but up close it is a delicate and deliberate fusion of stroke and field. / A group of three strange and engagingly ugly sculptures of anthropomorphic forms covered in pennies, each form having one or two extra limbs. Through Nov. 30. (Koury, 89 Greene St.)

Steve Gianakos—Over the past two decades Gianakos's bite has come from his deliberate use of offensive humor, particularly in relation to politically incorrect and taboo subjects. But there are no punch lines to these truly perverse paintings of maimed girlie pinups against finely constructed nonobjective fields. These are the artist's most disturbing and perhaps most penetrating works. Through Oct. 26. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

Roni Horn—An impressive if overly theatrical installation of otherworldly sculptures made of polished stainless steel and tarnished copper. The objects are arranged as if they were pieces in some cosmic, transcendental game of chess. In a somewhat tedious exercise, Horn has duplicated the objects and arranged the duplicates in the same manner in a *much smaller room.* The gallery's exquisitely subtle filtered natural light perfectly complements the installation. A beautiful book of the artist's photographs of sheepfolds in Iceland accompanies the exhibition. Through Nov. 9. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)



Photographer Annie Leibovitz

Alfred Leslie—Five monumental figurative paintings from 1964 to 1968. Three of the works are grisaille paintings of female nudes, and another, of a clothed female figure, is the only remaining canvas from a much larger pivotal group of grisailles that were destroyed in a fire. (The three nudes were made immediately after the fire.) The group marked the artist's full embrace of a reactionary realistic painting technique during the height of Pop and minimalism and in the wake of his own quite skillful forays into Abstract Expressionism. The fifth work is in color, *and all five have a haunting, sharply flashlit* monumentalism. Through Dec. 21. (Flynn, 113 Crosby St.)

Patty Martori—This artist is moving away from the highly successful theatricality that has been her signature—a risky and somewhat admirable strategy that has met with limited success. This exhibition centers on a series of small, enterable houses lined with pictures that offer a gruesome view of the war between the sexes. There are also several smaller, burnt houses, and a "levitating" sheet surrounded by cast-iron dogs whose heads are masked by oversized do-rags. All these violent domestic dismantlings seem informed by a social surrealism that is less detached than that of the artist's previous work, and they consequently suffer from a lack of subtlety. Through Nov. 9. (Hearn, 39 Wooster St.)

John Miller—Modest-size, deliberately amateurish paintings of the American Scene updated, somewhat, with such oddities as a nuclear reactor, a Tinkertoy construction, a couple at an altar bathed in phosphorescent light, and a K.K.K. meeting. The subjects, inherently loaded with meaning, are presented without rhetoric, and their affect is akin to the insane calm of Terrence Mallick's film "Badlands." This is one of those shows that get stronger and more unsettling as the images accumulate. Through Nov. 9. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

Thomas Nozkowski—Small, perfectly pleasant abstract paintings with a taste for the eccentric but without the finesse to express it. Through Nov. 9. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

Mel Ramos—Early-sixties Pop paintings of cheesecake "chicks," from the "Nile Queen" to the "Devil Doll." Because of several generations of cultural commentators younger than Ramos, these paintings have a certain resonance. But, as always, it is unclear to what extent, if any, Ramos' objectification of women is rooted in irony. Through Oct. 26. (Meisel, 141 Prince St.)

Robert Smithson (1938-73) / **Adrian Piper**—A good installation of several different types of work, including a mirror-displacement piece and several engaging minimalist wall works, from the mid-sixties, that are made of glittery decal materials. Three small sculptures made of cardboard pierced by sticks have an anti-monumental, sixties spirit. / Piper has become one of the most articulate, politically confrontational artists around. This exhibition of early works, from the late sixties, includes paintings and drawings based on a grid, and a number of narrative pieces. Individually the works are not so interesting, but as records of stages in an artist's development they are highly informative. Through Oct. 26. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

"Devices"—Large thematic shows have been so mediocre lately that this exceedingly clever assortment of works that variously talk, make drawings, spin, and hit you in the neck with a baseball bat, is thoroughly refreshing. Curator Bruce Ferguson has brought together both familiar and unknown objects and drawings with utter ease and de[illegible]ht. He has an eye for the little gem, such as Rebecca Horn's tattered wings made of the pages of Kafka's "Amerika"; the frantically contorted, such as Deborah Whitman's contraption for viewing oneself; the timely untimely, in the form of Ashley Bickerton's machine which clocks its own supposed rising value; and the brilliant shaggy-dog story, in the form of Fischli Weiss' videotaped endless chain reaction. The real curatorial intelligence here resides in the fact that beneath the show's sheer viewer delight there is a serious point: these works speak of breakdown, madness, and a profound much-ado about nothingness. Through Nov. 16. (Baer, 476 Broome St.)

"Plastic Fantastic Lover (object a)"—There is a lot of new information in this gathering of work by twenty-one women, but the show is a mess, and even the interesting pieces pale in the circusy atmosphere. Chief among the hidden treasures, of which there are few, is a "painting" by Rosemarie Trockel of five electric-stove burners on a white, baked-enamel surface. The jury is still out on Angela Bulloch's emphatically dumb and gently mesmerizing blue-light plastic bubbles, but a path of colored-paper pom-poms by Polly Apfelbaum is nothing more than cute and stupid. The exhibition is dominated by such gratuitous items as an intricate contraption in which quail eggs are being catalogued and a theatrically fail-safe quartet of exceedingly long, purple velvet bathrobes. Through Nov. 15. (Blum Helman Warehouse, 80 Greene St.)

Short List—**CAROL ANTHONY,** Davidson, 415 West Broadway (through Nov. 16); **MATTHEW BARNEY,** Gladstone, 99 Greene St. (through Nov. 16); **SALLIE BENTON,** First Street Gallery, 560 Broadway (through Nov. 2); **ASHLEY BICKERTON,** Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway (through Nov. 9); **GARY BUKOVNIK,** Staempfli, 415 West Broadway (through Nov. 2); **DAVID DIAO,** Postmasters, 80 Greene St. (through Nov. 16); **GÜNTER FÖRG,** Lorence-Monk, 568 Broadway (through Nov. 30); **ANTON HENNING,** Baghoomian, 555 Broadway (through Nov. 16); **LIZ LARNER,** 303 Gallery, 89 Greene St. (through Nov. 16); **HUGHIE LEE-SMITH,** Kelly, 591 Broadway (through Nov. 5); **MICHAEL LOEW,** Pearl, 420 West Broadway (through Nov. 16); **RICHARD LONG,** Sperone Westwater, 121 Greene St. (through Nov. 16); **LEO MANSO,** Levy, 415 West Broadway (through Nov. 16); **MARINO MARINI,** Nahan, 381 West Broadway (open daily, through Oct. 30); **ANN MESSNER,** Fawbush, 76 Grand St. (through Nov. 16); **ED MOSES,** Louver, 130 Prince St. (through Nov. 23); **JESÚS RAFAEL SOTO,** Humphrey, 594 Broadway (through Nov. 9); **FRANK STELLA,** RubinSpangle, 395 West Broadway (through Nov. 16); **PAUL THEK,** Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (through Nov. 13); **URSULA VON RYDINGSVÄRD,** Lorenc[illegible]-Monk, 578 Broadway (through Oct. 26); **PA[illegible] WALDMAN,** Castelli, 420 West Broadway (through Nov. 16).

OTHER GALLERIES

Short List—**ROZ CHAST,** Illustration Gallery, 330 E. 11th St. (opens at 1 Tuesdays through Sundays, through Dec. 1); **RALPH HUMPHREY,** Hunter College Gallery, Lexington Ave. at 68th St. (opens at 1, closed Saturdays, through Oct. 26); **TOBI KAHN,** Ryan, 452 Columbus Ave., at 81st St. (through Nov. 16); **BRICE MARDEN,** Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. (opens at noon Thursdays through Sundays, through May 31); **ROBERT SMITHSON,** Schermerhorn Hall, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. (opens at 1 Wednesdays through Saturdays, through Oct. 26); **BILL TRAYLOR,** Ricco/Maresca, 105 Hudson St. (through Nov. 9).

PHOTOGRAPHY

OUR rounds of current shows left us thinking about two exhibitions in particular. They look very different from each other, but each has a lot to do with technology and art—with the common denominator being freedom, rather than the usual apocalyptic take on technological control. Both exhibitions are oddly beautiful. Peter Campus's black-and-white digital photographs (Cooper, 149 Wooster Street; through November 2) are sophisticated computer-enhanced products, sculptural images that balance nature and artifice, the found and the sought, objects and their backgrounds; these elements come together in both old- and new-looking pictures. Campus's images remind us of the tradition of romantic nature photography like that practiced by Ansel Adams, but they also have something Japanese about them. They seem both suspended between cultures and floating in time.

Dike Blair's color photo-works, which also involve a computer process, are presented in a soothing installation at the Ealan Wingate gallery (578 Broadway; through November 2). Most of the pieces have as their foundation details of photographs that Blair took at Florida's EPCOT Center. He has blown up the images and covered them in glass, adding paint, paper, and etching, as well as such elements as an oil-painted alarm clock. In a letter to his gallery, Blair used the question "What is it?" to describe the work. Such mystery is a big part of what he has done with photography, fractals, abstract painting, Disney, and much else. The works are installed in a room that has been painted, carpeted, darkened, Muzaked, and decorated with plants and suburban benches. But the result isn't kitschy; the installation provides the gallery, during its final days, with its own brand of spiritualism.

André Kertész (1894-1985)—The opening show of the former Photofind gallery, in its new location and under a new name. What is striking about this Kertész show, titled "The New York Years, 1936-1985," is the way his images preserve the history of New York. There's an eensy picture from around 1950 that in someone else's hands would be a throwaway: it shows only a wagon wheel, a pigeon, and track-marked snow. Yet the manner in which the three elements come together makes the photo a fragment of time gone by in this city, as soulful as a broken-off piece of ancient statuary. Through Nov. 2. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St.... ¶ A complementary exhibition of vintage prints from 1917 to 1936, taken in Hungary and Paris, is at Houk Friedman, 1094 Madison Ave., at 82nd St. Through Nov. 2.)

Short List—**tina barney,** Borden, 560 Broadway (through Nov. 27); **robert capa,** International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; through Nov. 17); **lee friedlander,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (through Nov. 23); **philippe halsman,** Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway (through Oct. 26); **annie leibovitz,** International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8, through Dec. 1); **duane michals,** Janis, 110 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Nov. 2); **jean pigozzi,** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. (through Nov. 15); **laurie simmons,** Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St. (through Nov. 16).

MUSIC

FUNNY things happen when Italians, whose language is the wellspring of song, attempt to sing in others. A few have done it ably (Tito Schipa, Giuseppe Di Stefano—not that they did it much); some have done it endearingly badly while nevertheless making gorgeous sounds (Renata Tebaldi's "Eef Ai Luffed You" comes to mind); some have found that the whole singing mechanism clutches up when deprived of its native lubricant.

Funny things also happen when non-Russians sing opera written in Russian, a language not widely taught in the secondary schools of countries beyond the former East Bloc. Much of the glorious color of the language and the feeling of depth and rightness it brings to the music of Tchaikovsky and Mussorgsky can somehow evaporate when a high proportion of the cast is parroting (however expertly) rote syllables. The difference has been much on display over the years at the Metropolitan Opera, as Russian-speaking and non-Russian-speaking principals have drifted in and out of the rotating casts of "Eugene Onegin," "Boris Godunov," and "Khovanschina."

But Mirella Freni, the preëminent Italian lyric soprano of her generation, has proved an unexpected exception to these generalizations. Unexpected, because for decades now she has been singing her few French roles in the charmingly naïve conviction that words like *tu* and *de* could not possibly be meant to sound any other way than the way they sound in Italian. And if she has spent much time singing in German we don't recall hearing anything about it. So we didn't think of her as a linguist. But about a decade ago, as we recall, Rachmaninoff songs in Russian started to turn up on her recital programs, and in the middle nineteen-eighties she started singing Tatiana in "Onegin."

Now Ms. Freni has taken up Lisa in "The Queen of Spades," and New York will hear the results on October 26, when the Boston Symphony brings the opera to Carnegie Hall in concert form. We know very little Russian but are well accustomed to listening to it in song and opera, and, having heard Ms. Freni's experiments on several occasions, we find ourself grateful to her for making the effort. And, though nothing public has been said about this, we like to think of her proficiency as having been acquired via pillow talk from the basso Nicolai Ghiaurov, who became Ms. Freni's second husband around the time that the Slavic repertoire began to show up on her schedule.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall 875-5050; for Avery Fisher Hall 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

OPERA AND FILM

Metropolitan Opera—**un ballo in maschera,** with Deborah Voigt, Sumi Jo, Stefania Toczyska, Peter Dvorsky, and Sherrill Milnes; conducted by Thomas Fulton. (Oct. 21 at 8.)... With Deborah Voigt, Sumi Jo, Stefania Toczyska, Peter Dvorsky, and Juan Pons; Thomas Fulton. (Oct. 26 at 8.)... **die zauberflöte,** with Dawn Upshaw, Ruth Welting, Jerry Hadley, Mikael Melbye, and Jan-Hendrik Rootering; Julius Rudel. (Oct. 22 at 8.)... With Hei-Kyung Hong, Ruth Welting, Peter Kazaras, Mikael Melbye, and Jan-Hendrik Rootering; Julius Rudel. (Oct. 25 at 8.)... With Hei-Kyung Hong, Ruth Welting, Jerry Hadley, Hâkan Hagegård, and Hans Sotin; Julius Rudel. (Oct. 30 at 8.)... **la fanciulla del west,** a new production of Puccini's pistol-packin' "spaghetti Western," with Barbara Daniels, Placido Domingo, and Sherrill Milnes; Leonard Slatkin. (Oct. 23 at 8 and Oct. 26 at 1:30.)... With Barbara Daniels, Placido Domingo, and George Fortune; Leonard Slatkin. (Oct. 29 at 8.)... **l'elisir d'amore,** the opening performances of a new production, with Kathleen Battle, Luciano Pavarotti, Juan Pons, and Enzo Dara; Marcello Panni. (Oct. 24 at 7 and Oct. 28 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

New York City Opera—**madame butterfly,** with Cynthia Lawrence, Jennifer Lane, Vincenzo Scuderi, and Peter Lightfoot; conducted by Mark Gibson. (Oct. 22 at 8.)... **die soldaten,** Bernd Alois Zimmermann's complex, eclectic opera, with a large cast that includes Lisa Saffer, Claudia Cummings, Cynthia Rose, Joyce Castle, Thomas Young, Eugene Perry, Jan Opalach, and Michael Rees Davis; Christopher Keene. (Oct. 23 at 8.)... **la bohème,** with Gwynne Geyer, Pamela South, Michael Myers, and Gordon Hawkins; Joseph Colaneri. (Oct. 24 at 8 and Oct. 27 at 2.)... **the mother of three sons,** a new "dance opera" conceived, directed, and choreographed by Bill T. Jones, with music by Leroy Jenkins; Ruby Hinds and Rhodessa Jones are the singers, and the dancers are Jeff McLamb, Warren Miller, Leonard Cruz, and Mr. Jones himself. William Henry Curry conducts. (Oct. 25 and Oct. 29 at 8.)... **tosca,** with Edith Davis, Vincenzo Scuderi, and Sigmund Cowan; Steven Sloane. (Oct. 26 at 2.)... **la traviata,** with Gail Dobish, Michael Rees Davis, and Peter Barcza; Guido Ajmone-Marsan. (Oct. 26 and Oct. 30 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

"Alexander Nevsky"—A screening of Sergei Eisenstein's film, with Seiji Ozawa conducting the Boston Symphony, the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, and mezzo-soprano soloist Janis Taylor in the score that Prokofiev wrote to accompany the film. When it appeared, in 1938, Eisenstein's film was acclaimed as a technical and artistic milestone, not to mention a potent piece of propaganda (depicting as it does the thirteenth-century Russian prince's defeat of marauding Teutonic hordes). A rare opportunity to experience the film with live musical accompaniment (as it was intended to have), this presentation (overseen by producer John Goberman) employs an exceptionally clear print, made directly from the original nitrate negative in Moscow. Images, dialogue, and sound effects are thereby enhanced. (Avery Fisher Hall. Oct. 25 at 8:30.)

Silent Films with Orchestra—The Orchestra of St. Luke's, conducted by Armin Brunner, who arranged the scores to accompany three films from the early years of cinema. Oct. 25 at 7: "Nosferatu" (1922; directed by F. W. Murnau), with a score derived from Bach.... ¶ Oct. 26 at 3: "Carmen" (Ernst Lubitsch's 1918 interpretation of every operagoer's favorite gypsy tale), with a score taken from Bizet, De Falla, and Rimsky-Korsakov.... ¶ Oct. 26 at 7: "Der Rosenkavalier" (1926; directed by Robert Wiene), with music by Richard Strauss. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949.)

"Pique Dame"—A concert performance of the Tchaikovsky opera known to some as "The Queen of Spades"; with Seiji Ozawa conducting the Boston Symphony, the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, the American Boychoir, and a cast that includes soprano Mirella Freni, mezzo-soprano Katherine Ciesinski, contralto Maureen Forrester, tenor Vladimir Atlantov, and baritones Dmitri Hvorostovsky and Sergei Lieferkus. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 26 at 8.)

Lee Hoiby Operas—See under "Bon Appétit!" in Theatre listings.

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall. Oct. 22 at 7:30: Kurt Masur conducts Dvořák's Ninth Symphony ("From the New World") and Schnittke's Cello Concerto (with soloist

MUSIC–Cont'd

Natalia Gutman). . . . ¶ Oct. 24 and Oct. 26 at 8, Oct. 25 at 11 A.M., and Oct. 29 at 7:30: Claus Peter Flor conducts Shostakovich's Tenth Symphony and Mozart's A-Major Piano Concerto (K. 414), featuring Rudolf Firkušný.

Warsaw Philharmonic—Kazimierz Kord conducts Beethoven's "Egmont" Overture, Shostakovich's First Symphony, and Prokofiev's Second Piano Concerto (featuring Alexander Toradze). (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 22 at 8.)

Boston Symphony—Seiji Ozawa conducts Berlioz's "Roman Carnival Overture," Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, and Ravel's "Concerto for the Left Hand" (with pianist Leon Fleisher). (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 23-24 at 8.). . . **NOTE:** See also "Alexander Nevsky" and "Pique Dame" listings under "Opera and Film."

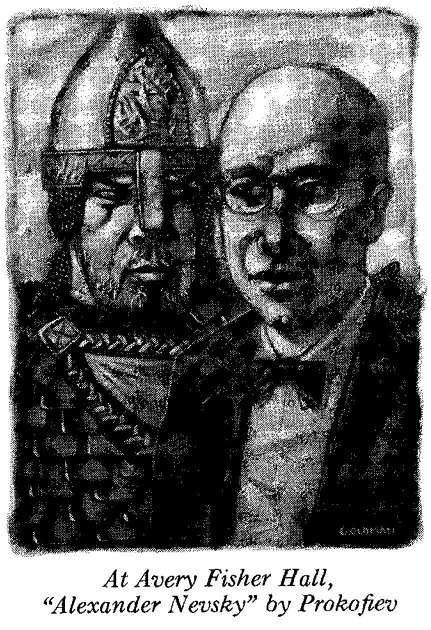
Concordia—Marin Alsop conducts the chamber orchestra in Barber's Second Symphony as well as works by Frank Zappa, Harold Farberman (the première of his Vibraphone Concerto, featuring Gary Burton), and Scott Bradley (his score for a Tom-and-Jerry cartoon, which will be shown). (Alice Tully Hall. Oct. 24 at 8.)

Manhattan Chamber Orchestra—Richard Auldon Clark conducts Copland's "Music for Movies" and Schoenberg's "Pierrot Lunaire" (with soprano Lynne Vardaman). (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Oct. 24 at 8.)

Mozart Masses in Concert—The Juilliard Symphony and the Barnard-Columbia Chorus, both directed by Joseph Flummerfelt, perform Mozart's "Aulica" Mass (K. 337), as well as a motet, a church sonata, and the "Linz" Symphony. (Alice Tully Hall. Oct. 25 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

Bloomingdale Chamber Orchestra—Dejan Slavić conducts Beethoven's Fifth Symphony; "Four Balkan Dances," a 1938 piece by Josip Slavenski, whose works reflect his interest in both his region's folk music and the compositional techniques of the early-twentieth-century avant-garde; and Mozart's Piano Concerto in E-Flat Major (K. 482), featuring Juliana Osinchuk. (Broadway Presbyterian Church, Broadway at 114th St. Oct. 26 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

European Community Baroque Orchestra—Though its name displays all the euphony of a flat tire coming to a halt, the group includes among its members some of the leading period-instrument performers, all under thirty years old, from all over Europe. Monica Huggett conducts (and sometimes doubles as violin soloist in) works by Georg Muffat (the Second Sonata, in G Minor, from his "Armonico Tributo"), concertos by Vivaldi and Francesco Bonporti, and several "character" pieces from the seventeenth century: Heinrich Ignaz Biber's "Battalia" and "Die Nachtwacht" (the former reflecting the sounds of battle, and the latter incorporating the reassuring serenade of a night watchman); Johann Heinrich Schmelzer's "Fechtschule" (reproducing the clatter of a "Fencing School"); and Carlo Farina's "Capriccio Stravagante" (which includes the sounds of village pipers, a clucked conversation between a hen and a rooster, the howling of a dog, and a sort-of-musical cat fight). Presented by Music Before 1800. (Corpus Christi Church, W. 121st St., just east of Broadway. 666-0675. Oct. 27 at 4.)



At Avery Fisher Hall, "Alexander Nevsky" by Prokofiev

Musica Sacra—Richard Westenburg directs Mozart's "Coronation" Mass (K. 317) and Haydn's Missa Solemnis in D Major (the "Lord Nelson"), with soloists that include soprano Marvis Martin. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 30 at 8.)

RECITALS

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Presenting music by Telemann, Mendelssohn, Wolf, Schoenberg, and Shostakovich. (Alice Tully Hall. Oct. 22 at 7:30.)

Charles Rosen and Rolf Schulte—The pianist and the violinist perform solos and duos by Elliott Carter, Donald Martino, and Schoenberg. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Oct. 22 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Marc Ponthus—The pianist performs the complete solo-piano works of Pierre Boulez, comprising the three sonatas and "Twelve Notations." (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Oct. 22 at 8.)

Clarion Concerts—Clarion Music Society, an intrepid purveyor of obscure scores for the past thirty-five years, opens its season with a program of little-known Italian Baroque works, played on period instruments. Lutenist Paul O'Dette and mezzo-soprano Elaine Bonazzi are among the soloists. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 22 at 8.)

Juilliard String Quartet—Performing an all-Mozart concert: three quartets and (with violist Michael Tree) the C-Minor Quintet. (Alice Tully Hall. Oct. 23 at 8.)

Ensemble Project Ars Nova—The vocal and instrumental quintet performs two very different song "cycles": selections from the "Remede de Fortune" by the fourteenth-century French poet and composer Guillaume de Machaut, and the New York première of Robert Kyr's "Songs of the Shining Wind," a collection of seven contemporary motets. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Oct. 23 at 8.)

Bargemusic—David Starobin performs guitar études by Giulio Regondi on a program that also includes chamber music by Schubert, Paganini, and Mauro Giuliani. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Oct. 24 at 7:30 and Oct. 27 at 4.)

David Schrader—Organist, performing a program that includes works by Julius Reubke and Marcel Dupré. (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. Oct. 24 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Turtle Island String Quartet—Performing jazz and blues works. (Weill Recital Hall. Oct. 25 at 8.)

Talking Drums—A trio of percussionists performs John Cage's "Suite Father of Tree," featuring choregraphy and performance by Merce Cunningham, as well as works by Yoko Ono, Michael Pugliese (one of the group's members), and others. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Oct. 25 at 8:30.)

Nancy Garniez—Pianist, performing premières of works by Ursula Mamlok and Eric Sawyer, as well as music by Handel, Haydn, Chopin, and Dvořák. (Weill Recital Hall. Oct. 26 at 5:30.)

Hecht and Shapiro—The husband-and-wife piano duo performs Rachmaninoff, Ravel, and Manuel Infante. Presented by Salon De Virtuosi. (Steinway Hall, 109 W. 57th St. Oct. 26 at 6:30. For information about tickets, call 369-3911.)

Yevgeny Kissin—As a follow-up to his loudly cheered début recital last season, the pianist performs Schubert's "Wanderer" Fantasy, Liszt's Twelfth Hungarian Rhapsody (as well as four Liszt arrangements of Schubert songs), and the seven pieces that make up Brahms' Op. 116. (Avery Fisher Hall. Oct. 27 at 3.)

Ensemble Instrumental d'Avignon—In the first of a five-part series in which they will concentrate on early-twentieth-century French chamber-music repertoire, members of the sextet perform works by (among others) Debussy, Fauré, Duruflé, and Messiaen. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Oct. 27 at 3.)

Collegium Antiquum—The string ensemble performs works by Bach, Vivaldi, and Mozart; featuring flutist Eugenia Zukerman and harpsichordists Anthony Newman and Mary Jane Newman. (St. Paul's Chapel, Broadway at Fulton St. 602-0873. Oct. 27 at 4.)

Purcell Quartet—The English ensemble—consisting of two violins, viola da gamba, and harpsichord—performs works for various combinations by Bach, Leclair, Vivaldi, and Purcell. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Oct. 27 at 5.)

Michiko Takahashi—Music-lovers who sense their lives are incomplete because they have never heard a recital on the contrabass marimba can now ensure that they will go to their graves happily. In her New York début, Ms. Takahashi will concentrate on music composed for that lowest member of the marimba family, a seven-octave contraption which she invented by adding extra segments to a "standard" bass marimba and arranging the total sixteen-foot-long expanse in a vast semicircle. Her program includes works by Toshiro Mayuzumi, Ton de Leeuw, and Byung-Dong Paik. Flutist Bradley A. Garner, percussionists Dominic Donato and James Baker, and pianist Christopher Oldfather assist. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 28 at 8.). . . **NOTE:** Persons interested in seeing the performer and her instrument at very close range may do so at a brief recital at the Yamaha Communication Center, 142 W. 57th St., on Oct. 23 at 1.

Audubon String Quartet—Performing music by Mozart, Mendelssohn, Wolf, and Puccini. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 29 at 2.)

Jörg Demus—The Austrian pianist performs works by Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert, as well as a composition of his own. A benefit concert. (Weill Recital Hall. Oct. 29 at 8.)

Rian de Waal—In his New York début recital, the Dutch pianist performs Schubert's "Wanderer" Fantasy and two impromptus, as well as transcriptions by the legendary pianist Leopold Godowsky of music by Schubert and Johann Strauss. (Alice Tully Hall. Oct. 29 at 8.)

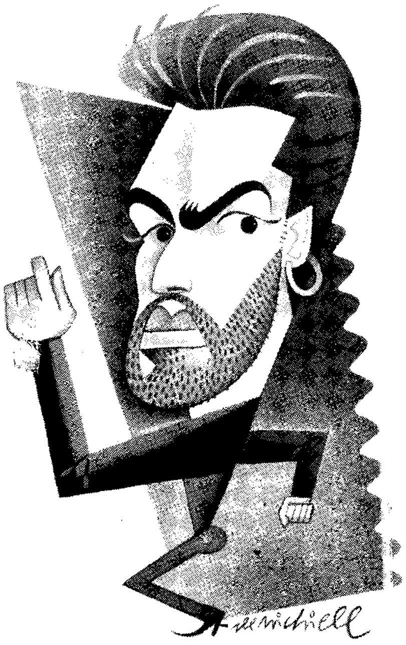
Mirella Freni—The soprano performs songs by Cilea, Boito, Verdi, Puccini, and Catalani; assisted by the Orchestra of St. Luke's, with Robert Abbado conducting. (Avery Fisher Hall. Oct. 30 at 8.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Ann-Margret—One of the iconic sirens of Camelot, more recently a half-reclusive habitué of Vegas and of movie and television screens, is making her New York début at the age of fifty, finally putting to rest three decades of Manhattan-phobia with a stage show that is "big" in a way that is almost obsolete. The Rockettes will be co-starring in what ought to be the Radio City extravaganza par excellence—a cheesy, glitzy, deeply time-warped spectacle, a gigantic show-biz catharsis, a Hollywood-Broadway love fest. If you've never felt the ersatz ecstasy brought on by a vision of synchronized gams soaring skyward—or if you want to relive the experience—this may be the best chance you'll ever have to get your kicks. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Oct. 22-25 at 8, Oct. 26 at 2:30 at 8, and Oct. 27 at 2 and 7.)

Nanci Griffith—This Texas-born resident of Nashville has made her full-fledged Pop Move with a new album, "Late Night Grande Hotel," which features elaborate string arrangements and synthesized keyboards, and downplays the folk and country elements that predominated during her decade-long career rise. There are a couple of overproduced clinkers on the album, but by and large it confirms her talent for writing and performing clever, unpredictable, and slightly elliptical story-songs. With the seasoning of all those years on the road and a growing audience of true believers behind her, Nanci Griffith can be relied on to provide a rich evening. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Oct. 30 at 8.)

George Michael—The stubble remains the same, but this Greco-English soul man has shed a long list of encumbrances on his journey from the Plasticine pop of Wham! to ultimate credibility. (Among recent developments: last year Michael gave what he described as his last interview and forswore appearing in videos "for the foreseeable future," and he has reportedly worn baggy pants and a friendly smile during earlier



George Michael

dates on this tour.) There's even a hint of future renunciation in the "Cover to Cover" theme of this concert: like a singer on a farewell tour, Michael is offering a greatest-hits summing-up of his relatively brief career (including a few Wham! songs), together with cover versions of some of the singer's favorites by Chaka Khan, Soul II Soul, David Bowie, Elton John, and others. He may eventually disappear altogether—the final superstar luxury—but for now, the game's still afoot, and every hit and hip-twitch will drive the fans wild. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Oct. 25-26 at 7:30.)

Van Halen—With Alice in Chains. (Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. Oct. 24 at 7:30 and Oct. 25 at 8. . . . ¶ Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300. Oct. 27 at 7:30.)

Barry Harris and Jimmy Slyde—New School, 66 W. 12th St. Oct. 25 at 6. Tickets at the door on the evening of the concert.

Gyuto Tantric Choir—Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Oct. 25 at 8.

Acoustic Alchemy—With Strunz & Farah and Bela Fleck & the Flecktones. (Beacon Theatre. Oct. 25 at 8.)

James Taylor—Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Oct. 25-27 and Oct. 29-31 at 8.

David Benoit—With the Rippingtons. (Beacon Theatre. Oct. 26 at 8.)

Music of South India—T. Viswanathan, Tricky Sankaran, and Anantha Krishnan. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Oct. 26 at 8.)

Ravi Shankar—With Shubho Shankar and Abhiman Kaushal. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Oct. 30 at 8.)

Roulette—Oct. 25: A Cloud Nine Consort. . . ¶ Oct. 26: Anthony Coleman. . . . ¶ Oct. 27: Anthony Davis and Cynthia Aaronson. (228 West Broadway. 219-8242. Concerts at 9.)

The Concert for Walden Woods—Actually, *three* concerts. Don Henley, Billy Joel, and Sting on Oct. 21-22. . . . ¶ Mr. Henley, Bonnie Raitt, and Jimmy Buffett on Oct. 24. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Concerts at 8.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Giants—Vs. the Washington Redskins, Oct. 27 at 7:30.

Rangers—Vs. the Los Angeles Kings, Oct. 23. . . . ¶ Vs. the Minnesota North Stars, Oct. 29. (Game time, 7:30.)

Islanders—Vs. the Winnipeg Jets, Oct. 22. . . ¶ Vs. the Los Angeles Kings, Oct. 26. . . . ¶ Vs. the San Jose Sharks, Oct. 29. (Game time 7:35.)

Devils—Vs. the Los Angeles Kings, Oct. 22. . . ¶ Vs. the San Jose Sharks, Oct. 26. (Game time, 7:35.)

(The Giants play at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands, 1-201 935-8111; the Rangers at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

RACING

Horses—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 12:30. Starts Oct. 23. The NYRA mile is Oct. 26. . . . At the Meadowlands: Tuesdays through Saturdays at 7:30. . . . **Trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weekdays at 8, and Tuesdays at 1.

CHAMPIONSHIP—BASEBALL

World Series—The third and fourth games of the World Series will be held on Oct. 22-23; the fifth, if necessary, on Oct. 24; and the sixth and seventh, also if necessary, on Oct. 26-27. All games will be on CBS.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Icy—The skating season is here. The rink at Rockefeller Center is open, and the Wollman Rink, in Central Park, will open Oct. 26, weather permitting.

41 Union Square West—Studio space for more than fifty artists, who will open their doors to the public on Oct. 26-27, from 11 to 5.

Posters—Promoting circuses, wars, getaways, flicks, fairs, and other spectacular events through the ages. (St. Moritz Hotel, 50 Central Park South. Oct. 26, from 11 to 8, and Oct. 27, from 11 to 6. Tickets at the door on the days of the show.)

Deepavali Festival—A celebration of light, based on Indian traditions. (South Street Seaport. Oct. 27, from noon to 6. Fireworks at 7. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—Oct. 23 at 6: Stanley Crouch talks about Charlie Parker. (Rose Building, 10th fl., 165 W. 65th St. For information about tickets, call 721-6500.). . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 6:30: Edwin Good talks about the evolution of the piano. (Steinway Hall, 109 W. 57th St. For reservations, which are required, call 246-1100.). . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 8: Robert Mann, a founder of the Juilliard String Quartet, talks about his career. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 6: Betty Friedan talks about the Thomas nomination and its media coverage. (Main Building, New York University, 100 Washington Sq. E., room 703. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 6:30: Hiroyiki Ishi talks about why the Japanese eat whale. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. For information about tickets, call 752-3015.). . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 6: Nien Cheng talks about living in Communist China. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. For information about tickets, call 930-0571.)

Readings—Oct. 24 at 8: Roy Blount, William Matthews, and Wendy Wasserstein read from their own works, in a benefit program. (West Side Y, 5 W. 63rd St. For information about tickets, call 875-4124.). . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 8: William Least Heat-Moon and Karen Tei Yamashita read from their own prose. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. For information about tickets, call 875-4124.). . . ¶ Oct. 26 at 8: Kathy Acker, Karen Finley, Richard Hell, and David Wojnarowicz read from Mr. Wojnarowicz's new book, "Close to the Knives." A benefit. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. For information about tickets, call 219-2166.). . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 7: Amy Clampitt and Maxine Kumin read poems by Marianne Moore; and John Hollander and William Jay Smith read poems by Edwin Arlington Robinson. The readings are part of a Vespers service. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 8: A. S. Byatt and Diane Johnson read from their own prose. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.). . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 7: Jorie Graham and Charles Wright read from their own poetry. (French Institute-Alliance Française, 22 E. 60th St. For information about tickets, call 427-5665.)

Walks—Sponsored by Adventure on a Shoestring: Across the George Washington Bridge, Oct. 25 at 2. (For information about both events, call 265-2663.). . . ¶ Sponsored by Rizzoli International: A look at the architecture between Sutton Pl. and E. 91st St, Oct. 26 at 9 A.M. (For reservations, call 1-203 767-8599.)

Memorandum—Daylight-saving time ends on Oct. 27 at 2 A.M. Turn the clocks back one hour.

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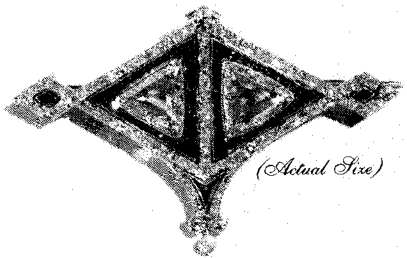

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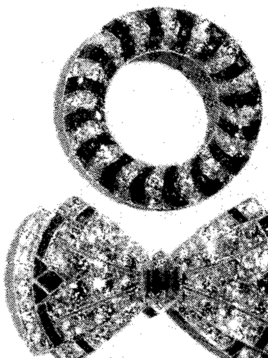

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in Platinum

AUCTIONS AT SWANN

Dickens, *David Copperfield*, first edition in book form, 1850.

November 7
at 10:30 a.m
RARE BOOKS
DICKENS IN PARTS AND CLOTH
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RUSSIAN ILLUSTRATED BOOKS
Illustrated Catalogue $20

November 14 at 10:30 a.m.
MEDICINE
NATURAL HISTORY
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
Catalogue $10

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WORKS OF ART ON PAPER
Including Masters of Surrealism
Illustrated Catalogue $20

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 22.

EAST SIDE

ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)

Theatre 1: "Resident Alien" (directed by Jonathan Nossiter), with Quentin Crisp.

Theatre 2: "Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll" (†).

Theatre 3: "The Rapture" (Michael Tolkin), with Mimi Rogers.

Theatre 4: "The Commitments" (†).

Theatre 5: "Thousand Pieces of Gold" (Nancy Kelly), with Rosalind Chao, Dennis Dun, Chris Cooper, and Michael Paul Chan.

Theatre 6: Through Oct. 24: "Building Bombs" and "Deadly Deception," both documentaries. From Oct. 25: "Life Is Sweet" (Mike Leigh), with Alison Steadman, Jim Broadbent, Claire Skinner, Joan Horrocks, and Timothy Spall.

PUBLIC THEATRE, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)

Oct. 21: Theatre closed.

Oct. 22: "Boudu Saved from Drowning" (1931, Jean Renoir; in French), with Michel Simon and Charles Grandval; and "The Baker's Wife" (1938, Marcel Pagnol; in French), with Raimu.

Oct. 23: "Le Schpountz" (1938, Marcel Pagnol; in French), with Fernandel, Orane Démazis, and Charpin; and "Jofroi" (1933, Pagnol; in French).

Oct. 24: "L'État Sauvage" (1978, François Girod; in French); and "Le Crabe Tambour" (1977, Pierre Schoendoerffer; in French).

Oct. 25-27: "Notebook on Cities and Clothes" (1989, Wim Wenders), a documentary; and "Kings of the Road" (1976, Wenders; in German).

Oct. 28: Theatre closed.

From Oct. 29: "The American Friend" (1977, Wim Wenders; in English, German, and French), with Dennis Hopper and Bruno Ganz.

MOVIELAND 8TH STREET TRIPLEX, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)

Theatre 1: "Barton Fink" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Fisher King" (†).

Theatre 3: "Ricochet" (Russell Mulcahy), with Denzel Washington and John Lithgow.

LOEWS VILLAGE THEATRE VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)

Theatre 1: "Frankie & Johnny" (†)

Theatre 2: "Dead Again" (†).

Theatre 3: "Whore" (Ken Russell), with Theresa Russell.

Theatre 4: "Frankie & Johnny" (†).

Theatre 5: "Other People's Money" (Norman Jewison), with Danny DeVito.

Theatre 6: "Rambling Rose" (Martha Coolidge), with Laura Dern, Diane Ladd, Lukas Hass, and Robert Duvall.

Theatre 7: "Cool As Ice" (David Kellogg), with Vanilla Ice.

CINEMA VILLAGE 12TH STREET, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

"Eating" (†).

VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)

Theatre 1: "Homicide" (David Mamet), with Joe Mantegna.

Theatre 2: "Homicide."

Theatre 3: "Deceived" (Damian Harris), with Goldie Hawn and John Heard.

Theatre 4: "The Boy Who Cried Bitch" (Juan Jose Campanella).

Theatre 5: "Twenty-One" (Don Boyd), with Patsy Kensit.

Theatre 6: "Shattered" (Wolfgang Petersen), with Tom Berenger, Bob Hoskins, and Greta Scacchi.

Theatre 7: "Paradise" (Mary Agnes Donoghue), with Melanie Griffith, Don Johnson, and Elijah Wood.

CINEMA VILLAGE 3RD AVENUE, between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)

"Festival of Animation 1991."

LOEWS 19TH STREET EAST 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)

Theatre 1: "Little Man Tate" (†).

Theatre 2: "Ricochet" (Russell Mulcahy), with Denzel Washington and John Lithgow.

Theatre 3: "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" (†).

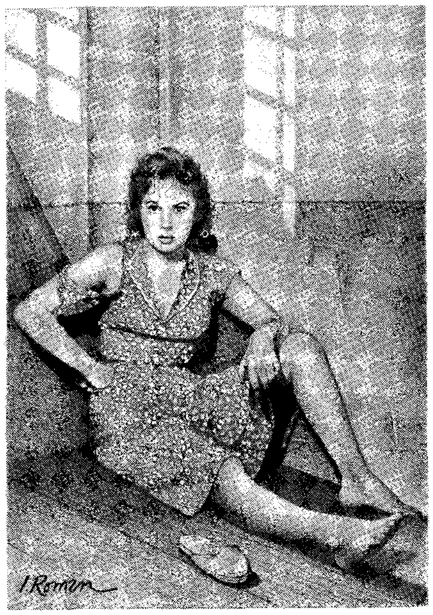
Theatre 4: Through Oct. 24: "The Taking of Beverly Hills" (Sidney J. Furie), with Ken Wahl. From Oct. 25: "The Butcher's Wife" (Terry Hughes), with Demi Moore and Jeff Daniels.

Theatre 5: "The Fisher King" (†).

Theatre 6: "Suburban Commando" (Burt Kennedy), with Hulk Hogan, Christopher Lloyd, and Shelley Duvall.

GRAMERCY, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)

"The Doctor" (†).



At MOMA, Marisa Merlini in "Bread, Love, and Dreams"

BAY CINEMA, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)

"Rambling Rose" (Martha Coolidge), with Laura Dern, Diane Ladd, Lukas Hass, and Robert Duvall.

MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)

Theatre 1: "Deceived" (Damian Harris), with Goldie Hawn and John Heard.

Theatre 2: "Dead Again" (†).

Theatre 3: "Shattered" (Wolfgang Petersen), with Tom Berenger, Bob Hoskins, and Greta Scacchi.

Theatre 4: "Paradise" (Mary Agnes Donoghue), with Melanie Griffith, Don Johnson, and Elijah Wood.

LOEWS 34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)

Theatre 1: "Other People's Money" (Norman Jewison), with Danny DeVito.

Theatre 2: "Frankie & Johnny" (†).

Theatre 3: Through Oct. 24: "Ricochet" (Russell Mulcahy), with Denzel Washington and John Lithgow. From Oct. 25: "The Butcher's Wife" (Terry Hughes), with Demi Moore and Jeff Daniels.

34TH ST. EAST, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)

"The Super" (†).

EASTSIDE CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)

"Uranus" (Claude Berri, in French).

SUTTON 1 AND 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)

Theatre 1: "Shattered" (Wolfgang Petersen), with Tom Berenger, Bob Hoskins, and Greta Scacchi.

Theatre 2: "Twenty-One" (Don Boyd), with Patsy Kensit.

GOTHAM CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)

"29th Street" (George Gallo), with Danny Aiello, Anthony LaPaglia, and Lainie Kazan.

PLAZA, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)

"My Own Private Idaho" (†).

MANHATTAN TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)

Theatre 1: "Cool As Ice" (David Kellogg), with Vanilla Ice.

Theatre 2: Through Oct. 22: "The Super"(†). From Oct. 23: "House Party 2" (Doug McHenry and George Jackson).

59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)

"Whore" (Ken Russell), with Theresa Russell.

BARONET AND CORONET, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)

Theatre 1: "Rambling Rose" (Martha Coolidge), with Laura Dern, Diane Ladd, Lukas Hass, and Robert Duvall.

Theatre 2: Through Oct. 24: "Barton Fink" (†). From Oct. 25: "The Butcher's Wife" (Terry Hughes), with Demi Moore and Jeff Daniels.

CINEMA I, CINEMA II, AND CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)

Theatre 1: "Deceived" (Damian Harris), with Goldie Hawn and John Heard.

Theatre 2: Through Oct. 24: "Paradise" (Mary Agnes Donoghue), with Melanie Griffith, Don Johnson, and Elijah Wood. From Oct. 25: "Antonia and Jane" (Beeban Kidron).

Theatre 3: "The Story of Boys and Girls" (Pupi Avati, in Italian).

GEMINI 1 AND 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)

Theatre 1: "The Fisher King" (†).

Theatre 2: "Ricochet" (Russell Mulcahy), with Denzel Washington and John Lithgow.

BEEKMAN, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)

"The Commitments" (†).

LOEWS NEW YORK TWIN, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)

Theatre 1: "Frankie & Johnny" (†).

Theatre 2: "Little Man Tate" (†).

68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)

"Homicide" (David Mamet), with Joe Mantegna.

LOEWS TOWER EAST, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)

"Other People's Money" (Norman Jewison), with Danny DeVito.

U. A. EAST, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)

"Frankie & Johnny"(†).

PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)

Theatre 1: Through Oct. 22: "The Taking of Beverly Hills" (Sidney J. Furie), with Ken Wahl. From Oct. 23: "House Party 2" (Doug McHenry and George Jackson).

Theatre 2: "The Super" (†).

86TH STREET EAST TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)

Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "Ernest Scared Stupid" (John Cherry), with Jim Varney; and (evenings only) "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" (†).

Theatre 2: "Deceived" (Damian Harris), with Goldie Hawn and John Heard.

WEST SIDE

FILM FORUM, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

Theatre 1: Through Oct. 29: "The Cry of the Owl" (1987, directed by Claude Chabrol; in French). From Oct. 30: "The Architecture of Doom" (1989, Peter Cohen; in German), a documentary.

Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.

Theatre 3: "Black Lizard" (†).

WAVERLY 1 AND 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)

Theatre 1: "My Own Private Idaho" (†).

Theatre 2: "My Own Private Idaho" (†).

8TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)

"Stepping Out" (†).

ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)

Theatre 1: Through Oct. 24: "The Super" (†). From Oct. 25: "The Butcher's Wife" (Terry Hughes), with Demi Moore and Jeff Daniels.

Theatre 2: "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" (†).

QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)

Theatre 1: "Slacker"(†).

Theatre 2: "My Mother's Castle" (Yves Robert, in French), with Julien Ciamaca.

Theatre 3: Through Oct 24: "Uranus" (Claude Berri, in French). From Oct. 25: To be announced.

Theatre 4: "Paris Is Burning" (Jennie Livingston), a documentary.

CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)

Theatre 1: "Deceived" (Damian Harris), with Goldie Hawn and John Heard.

Theatre 2: "Paradise" (Mary Agnes Donoghue), with Melanie Griffith, Don Johnson, and Elijah Wood.

Theatre 3: "City of Hope" (John Sayles), with Vincent Spano, Tony Lo Bianco, Joe Morton, Barbara Williams, and Sayles.

Theatre 4: "Homicide" (David Mamet), with Joe Mantegna.

Theatre 5: "Frankie & Johnny" (†).

Theatre 6: "The Commitments" (†).

Theatre 7: "Other People's Money" (Norman Jewison), with Danny DeVito.

Theatre 8: "Shattered" (Wolfgang Petersen), with Tom Berenger, Bob Hoskins, and Greta Scacchi.

Theatre 9: "The Super" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-[illegible]060)

Theatre 1: "Dead Again" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Oct. 22: (Matinées only) "Ernest Scared Stupid" (John Cherry) with Jim Varney; and "Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare" (Rachel Talalay), with Robert Englund and Lisa Zane. From Oct. 23: "House Party 2" (Doug McHenry and George Jackson).

Theatre 3: "Cool As Ice" (David Kellogg), with Vanilla Ice.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)

Through Oct. 24: "Paradise" (Mary Agnes Donoghue), with Melanie Griffith, Don Johnson, and Elijah Wood.

From Oct. 25: "The Butcher's Wife" (Terry Hughes), with Demi Moore and Jeff Daniels.

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)

Theatre 1: "Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare" (Rachel Talalay), with Robert Englund and Lisa Zane.

Theatre 2: "Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll" (†).

Theatre 3: "Dogfight" (Nancy Savoca), with River Phoenix and Lili Taylor.

Theatre 4: "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (†).

Theatre 5: "Whore" (Ken Russell), with Theresa Russell.

Theatre 6: "Necessary Roughness" (Stan Dragoti), with Scott Bakula.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)

"The Commitments" (†).

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)

"Dead Again" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)

"The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)

Theatre 1: "Barton Fink" (†).

Theatre 2: "Barton Fink" (†).

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)

"The Man in the Moon" (Robert Mulligan), with Sam Waterston, Tess Harper, and Gail Strickland.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)

"Stepping Out" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070

Through Oct. 24: "Stepping Out" (†).

From Oct. 25: "The Butcher's Wife" (Terry Hughes), with Demi Moore and Jeff Daniels.

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)

"Shattered" (Wolfgang Petersen), with Tom Berenger, Bob Hoskins, and Greta Scacchi.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)

Theatre 1: "City of Hope" (John Sayles), with Vincent Spano, Tony Lo Bianco, Joe Morton, Barbara Williams, and Sayles.

Theatre 2: "Europa Europa" (†).

Theatre 3: "La Belle Noiseuse" (Jacques Rivette, in French), with Michel Piccoli, Emmanuelle Béart, and Jane Birkin.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

"Rambling Rose" (Martha Coolidge), with Laura Dern, Diane Ladd, Lukas Hass, and Robert Duvall.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: "Ricochet" (Russell Mulcahy), with Denzel Washington and John Lithgow.

Theatre 2: "The Fisher King" (†).

Theatre 3: "Other People's Money" (Norman Jewison), with Danny DeVito.

Theatre 4: "Dead Again" (†).

Theatre 5: "Little Man Tate" (†).

Theatre 6: "Frankie & Johnny" (†).

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (22[illegible]-1200)

Theatre 1: Through Oct. 22: "Whore" (Ken Russell), with Theresa Russell. From Oct. 23: "House Party 2" (Doug McHenry and George Jackson).

Theatre 2: "Deceived" (Damian Harris), with Goldie Hawn and John Heard.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Super" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: "The Fisher King" (†).

Theatre 2: "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" (†).

Theatre 3: "Other People's Money" (directed by Norman Jewison), with Danny DeVito.

Theatre 4: "Ricochet" (Russell Mulcahy), with Denzel Washington and John Lithgow

Theatre 5: "The Super" (†).

Theatre 6: "Suburban Commando" (Burt Kennedy), with Hulk Hogan, Christopher Lloyd, and Shelley Duvall.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)

"Little Man Tate" (†).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 1: "Deceived" (Damian Harris), with Goldie Hawn and John Heard.

Theatre 2: "Dead Again" (†).

Theatre 3: "Ernest Scared Stupid" (John Cherry), with Jim Varney.

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

"Frankie & Johnny" (†).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: "Shattered" (Wolfgang Petersen), with Tom Berenger, Bob Hoskins, and Greta Scacchi

Theatre 2: "The Taking of Beverly Hills" (Sidney J. Furie), with Ken Wahl.

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)

Theatre 1: "Showdown in Little Tokyo" (Mark L. Lester), with Dolph Lundgren and Brandon Lee.

Theatre 2: "Boyz N the Hood" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

"The Wages of Fear" (1953, directed by Henri-Georges Clouzot; in French), with Yves Montand, Charles Vanel, Folco Lulli, and Peter Van Eyck.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Oct. 21: "Through a Glass Darkly" (1962, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Harriet Andersson, Gunnar Björnstrand, Max von Sydow, and Lars Passgård; and "The Silence" (1964, Bergman; in Swedish), with Ingrid Thulin and Gunnel Lindblom.

Oct. 22: "Fat City" (1972, John Huston), with Stacy Keach and Jeff Bridges; and "Beat the Devil" (1954, Huston), with Humphrey Bogart, Jennifer Jones, Gina Lollobrigida, Robert Morley, and Peter Lorre.

Oct. 23: "Wild Strawberries" (1957, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Victor Sjöström, Ingrid Thulin, and Gunnar Björnstrand; and "Shame" (1968, Bergman; in Swedish), with Liv Ullmann, Max von Sydow, and Björnstrand.

Oct. 24: "Letter from an Unknown Woman" (†); and "Caught" (1948, Max Ophuls), with Barbara Bel Geddes, James Mason, and Robert Ryan.

Oct. 25-26: "On the Waterfront" (1954, Elia Kazan), with Marlon Brando, Lee J. Cobb, Eva Marie Saint, Karl Malden, and Rod Steiger; and "The Wild One" (1954, Laslo Benedek), with Brando, Mary Murphy, and Lee Marvin.

Oct. 27: "The Last Picture Show" (†); and "Nickelodeon" (1976, Peter Bogdanovich), with Ryan O'Neal, Burt Reynolds, Tatum O'Neal, and Brian Keith.

Oct. 28: "La Femme Infidèle" (1969, Claude Chabrol; in French), with Stéphane Audran, Michel Bouquet, Michel Duchaussoy, and Maurice Ronet; and "This Man Must Die" (1969, Chabrol; in French), with Duchaussoy and Jean Yanne.

Oct. 29: "The Manchurian Candidate" (1962, John Frankenheimer), with Frank Sinatra, Laurence Harvey, Janet Leigh, Angela Lansbury, and James Gregory; and "On the Beach" (1959, Stanley Kramer), with Gregory Peck, Ava Gardner, Anthony Perkins, and Fred Astaire.

Oct. 30: "Scarface" (†); and "Hell's Angels" (†).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—Oct. 21 at 2:30 and Oct. 26 at 5: "Peddlin' in Society" (1946, directed by Gennaro Righelli; in Italian), with Vittorio De Sica and Anna Magnani. . . . ¶ Oct. 21 at 3: A program of eight short films each first shown at Millennium Film Workshop. . . . ¶ Oct. 21 and 25 at 6: "Indiscretion of an American Wife" (1954, De Sica), with Jennifer Jones, Montgomery Clift, Richard Beymer, and Gino Cervi. . . ¶ Oct. 21 at 6:30: A program of films by Jurgen Reble. . . . ¶ Oct. 22 at 2:30 and Oct. 27 at 5: "The Roof" (1956, De Sica; in Italian). . . . ¶ Oct. 22 at 3: "Hud" (1963, Martin Ritt), with Paul Newman, Patricia Neal, and Melvyn Douglas. . . . ¶ Oct. 22 at 6: "Anatomy of a Murder" (1959, Otto Preminger), with James Stewart, Lee Remick, Ben Gazzara, Arthur O'Connell, and George C. Scott. . . . ¶ Oct. 22 at 6: "Umberto D." (1952, Vittorio De Sica; in Italian). . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 2:30 and Oct. 27 at 2: "Hello, Elephant" (1952, Gianni Franciolini; in Italian), with De Sica, Maria Mercader, and Sabu. . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 3: "Diary, Part 1" (1988, David Perlov), a documentary. . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 6: "Diary, Part 2" (1988, Perlov), a documentary. . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 6: "Miracle in Milan" (1951, De Sica; in Italian), with Francesco Golissano, Brunella Bovo, Paolo Stoppa, and Emma Gramatica. . . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 2:30 and Oct. 26 at 5: "Death in Venice" (†). . . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 3 and Oct. 28 at 6: Episodes from four films, in Italian, directed by or with De Sica. . . . ¶ Oct. 25 at 6 and Oct. 26 at 2: "GoodFellas" (1990, Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro, Ray Liotta, Joe Pesci, Lorraine Bracco, and Paul Sorvino. . . . ¶ Oct. 26 and 28 at 2:30: "Bread, Love, and Dreams" (1953, Luigi Comencini; in Italian), with De Sica, Gina Lollobrigida, and Marisa Merlini. . . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 1: "Diary, Parts 1 and 2" (1988, Perlov), a documentary. . . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 3: "Across the Pacific" (†). . . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 6:30: "Queen of Diamonds" (1990, Nina Menkes). . . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 2:30: "Too Bad She's Bad" (†). . . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 3 and 6: "The Cherry Orchard" (1991, Shun Nakahara; in Japanese). . . . ¶ Oct. 29 at 6: "The Earrings of Madame de ..." (†).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)— Oct. 23-24 at 6 and 8. Oct. 25 at 6, 8, and 10, Oct. 26 at 1, 4, 6, 8, and 10, and Oct 27 at 2 and 4: Films from Tibet. . . . ¶ Oct. 23 at 7: A program of short films by Michael Snow and John and James Whitney. . . . ¶ Oct. 23 at 8:30: "Carriage Trade" (1972, Warren Sonbert). . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 7: Three short films by Jean Vigo. . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 8:30: "L'Atalante" (†). . . . ¶ Oct. 25-26 at 8: "Figment 1: Fluxglam Voyage in Search of the Real Maciunas" (1977-86, Paul Sharits). . . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 2: "On a Clear Day You Can See Forever" (1970, Vincente Minnelli), with Barbra Streisand and Yves Montand. . . . ¶ Oct. 30 at 8 and 10: "Senseless" (1962) and "The Flower Thief" (1960), both by Ron Rice.

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—Oct. 26 at 1 and 3:30: "Yumeji" (1991, Seijun Suzuki; in Japanese).

Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—Oct. 22 at noon: "The Bridge on the River Kwai" (1957, David Lean), with William Holden, Alec Guinness, Jack Hawkins, and Sessue Hayakawa. . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at noon: "Jaguar" (1958, Jean Rouch). . . . ¶ Oct. 29 at noon: "Lawrence of Arabia" (1962, Lean), wtih Guinness, Anthony Quinn, Peter O'Toole, Anthony Quayle, Omar Sharif, and José Ferrer.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Oct. 23 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Casque d'Or" (1952, Jacques Becker; in French), with Simone Signoret, Serge Reggiani, Claude Dauphin, Raymond Bussières, and Gaston Modot. . . . ¶ Oct. 30 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "French Cancan" (1954, Jean Renoir; in French), with Jean Gabin, Françoise Arnoul, Maria Felix, and Edith Piaf.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718-784-0077)—Oct. 26-27 at 2 and 6: "2001: A Space Odyssey" (1968, Stanley Kubrick), with Keir Dullea and Gary Lockwood.

Symphony Space, B'way at 95th St. (864-5400)—Oct. 21 at 7:30: A program of musical numbers featuring Carmen Miranda. . . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 7:30: "Twilight of the Cockroaches" (1987, Hiroaki Yoshida; in Japanese), an animated film. . . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 9:30: "Akira" (1989, Katsuhiro Otomo), an animated film.

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—Oct. 27 at 1 and 4:30: "Driving Miss Daisy" (1989, Bruce Beresford), with Morgan Freeman, Jessica Tandy, and Dan Aykroyd; and "Black Like Me" (1964, Carl Lerner), with James Whitmore, Roscoe Lee Browne, and Al Freeman, Jr. . . . ¶ Oct. 27 at 6:30: "To Sleep with Anger" (1990, Charles Burnett), with Danny Glover, Mary Alice, Richard Brooks, and Carl Lumbly; and "Alice Walker in Harlem" (1991). . . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 1 and 3:30: "They Came Before Columbus" (1990, Clemson Brown) and "Death of a Prophet: The Last Days in the Life of Malcolm X" (1982, Woodie King, Jr.), with Morgan Freeman. . . . ¶ Oct. 28 at 6:30: "Dances with Wolves" (Kevin Costner), with Costner, Mary McDonnell, Graham Greene, and Rodney A. Grant.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

Across the Pacific (1942)—After his exhilarating début film, "The Maltese Falcon" (1941), John Huston had a commercial failure with "In This Our Life"; then he tried to repeat the success of the "Falcon" with an action-adventure story, using some of the "Falcon" cast—Humphrey Bogart, Mary Astor, Sydney Greenstreet. The film was supposed to be about a group sailing to Honolulu to thwart a Japanese plan to blow up Pearl Harbor; during the second week of shooting, the Japanese did blow up Pearl Harbor. The production was shut down and there was a hasty rewrite. The result is a complicated plot about spies who plan to blow up the Panama Canal, and there are assorted captures and hairbreadth escapes. Huston manages to give the sequences some tension, and though the shipboard scenes were—in the custom of the time—filmed on the studio back lot, the images are airy and spacious. But Huston couldn't do anything about the essential mediocrity of the material, and when he was drafted into the Army Special Services before the picture was finished, he showed what he thought of the mess: he hurriedly shot a scene with Bogart trussed up and about to be killed, and then left his replacement director, Vincent Sherman, to figure out how to save Bogart in time to prevent the bombing of the canal. The movie isn't really bad—just bewildering. Mary Astor comes off the worst; cast as a conventional heroine, she looks heavy and uncomfortable, and too big for Bogart, who, incidentialy, was called Rick here—the name that was carried over the next year in "Casablanca." Script by Richard Macauley, from Robert Carson's *SatEvePost* serial "Aloha Means Goodbye."—P. K. (Museum of Modern Art; Oct. 28.)

L'Atalante (1934)—Jean Vigo, who died in his twenties, made only this one feature-length film—a sensuous, poetic love story about a young barge captain on the Seine, who marries and takes his bride with him; after a quarrel she runs off and they lose each other. Jean Dasté and Dita Parlo are the lovers, Michel Simon is the tattooed barge hand who finds her and brings her back. It's a wonderfully spontaneous, unarranged-looking film, photographed by Boris Kaufman, and with a lovely score by Maurice Jaubert. It's also a strange film—much slower and more consciously dreamlike than Vigo's short works. In some ways it's more pleasurable in the memory than while you're seeing it. With Louis Lefèvre. (Not released in the U.S. until 1947.) In French.—P.K. (Anthology Film Archives; Oct. 24.)

Barton Fink—The Coen brothers' macabre comedy about a blocked writer in 1941 Hollywood is densely packed with allusions, clever dialogue, ingenious visual jokes, startling plot twists, and imaginative atmospheric effects, yet it feels thin. It's an empty tour de force, and what's dismaying about the picture is that the filmmakers (Joel Coen directed, Ethan Coen produced, and they wrote the script together) seem inordinately pleased with its hermetic meaninglessness. Fink (John Turturro), the protagonist, is a left-wing New York playwright—obviously based on Clifford Odets—who signs a contract to write screenplays in Hollywood. His first assignment is a wrestling picture for Wallace Beery. He can't get started on it: he sits in his seedy, depressing hotel room, stares at the typewriter, and feels defeated. The Coens treat this emblematic figure of thirties culture with merciless contempt. They quickly expose him as a phony, a buffoon, and a talentless hack, and then spend the rest of the movie punishing him. The picture is designed to visit ever more grotesque indignities on a character who's pitiful from the outset; there's not much fun in that. And there's no fun at all in Turturro's hyperactive performance: the way he plays this leftist intellectual, the movie might as well have been called "The Nutty Pinko." The Coens' interests are purely academic, and their prankish formalism becomes very irritating in the course of the picture. Also with John Goodman, Michael Lerner, John Mahoney, Judy Davis, and Tony Shalhoub. The movie won awards for best picture, best director, and best actor (Turturro) at the 1991 Cannes Film Festival.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/9/91.) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas. . . . ¶ Coronet; through Oct. 24.)

At the Angelika Film Center, Alison Steadman, Jim Broadbent, Jane Horrocks, Timothy Spall, and Claire Skinner in "Life Is Sweet"

Black Lizard (1968)—Was Yukio Mishima a fan of the early, funny Woody Allen? This gaudy film version of his seriously decadent stage drama (based on a detective novel by Edogawa Rampo) plays like his answer to "What's Up, Tiger Lily?" It's no more than a curiosity, but not an idle one. Female impersonator Akihiro Maruyama is the distaff jewel thief of the title, who, as a sideline, robs human beauties of their souls and turns them into statues. The movie is swinging sixties trash with dash, filmed in "Shochiku GrandScope" and color that might have leaked out of a yo-yo factory. The director, Kinji Fukasaku, is a hype-happy hack, and the hero, supposedly Japan's top sleuth (played by Isao Kimura), is distinctly unmemorable. But the closing sequence is ripest camp, with Mishima himself showing up as one of the antiheroine's once-living dolls, a man so masculine that his hair won't stop growing even when he's in suspended animation. Written by Masashige Narusawa. In Japanese.—M.S. (Film Forum.)

Boyz N the Hood—The writer and director, John Singleton, is a twenty-three-year-old graduate of the U.S.C. film school. This movie, his first, is a classically constructed—and therefore rather predictable—coming-of-age drama about young black men growing up on the mean streets of south-central Los Angeles. The picture conveys a vivid sense of the dangers, both physical and emotional, of day-to-day existence in this ravaged urban environment. It's a war zone, and its inhabitants—the people on the front lines—mostly don't have the luxury of planning long-range survival strategies: they're too busy reacting to the immediate, unremitting daily threats. Singleton's evocation of real people's struggles to find some measure of peace and sanity in these grim urban circumstances is heartfelt and often moving, and the movie provides a welcome corrective to the dehumanizing sensationalism of the local-news version of inner-city life. But the young filmmaker's professionalism and precocious self-assurance work against his best instincts. Singleton's plot is disappointingly conventional; it obeys screenwriting-class rules. The experience he's dealing with here deserves something more than the tidy dramatic structure that he has imposed on it. We get glimpses of what the movie might have been in the complex, magnetic performance of Ice Cube, a rap star (formerly of N.W.A.), who plays a neighborhood gangster type named Doughboy. Also with Cuba Gooding, Jr., Larry Fishburne, Nia Long, Tyra Ferrell, and Angela Bassett.—T.R. (West Side Cinema.)

The Commitments—Alan Parker's film is a loose, friendly musical comedy about the brief career of an Irish soul band. The Commitments are the brainchild of an energetic young music enthusiast named Jimmy Rabbitte (Robert Arkins), who lives in a poor Dublin neighborhood. He puts together a ten-piece group that learns, eventually, to play precise and spirited versions of soul classics in the Memphis style. The music of the Commitments isn't original, but that doesn't prevent it from being enormously entertaining: the band's hard-won proficiency charms us. Parker concentrates on the day-to-day details of rehearsals and performances; he seems to revel in the complexity of the group's musical, emotional, and sexual interactions, and he does full comic justice to the petty irritations of life in a band. What holds the Commitments together is a combination of Jimmy's ingenuity, their common pleasure in making music, and the daily challenge of responding to their fellow band members' provocations with quick, profane humor. The kids' verbal sparring is another kind of music—maybe the true sound of Dublin soul. Until the last half hour, when the direction gets a little pushy, the picture has an offhand, unassuming grace. Most of the Commitments are played by young Dublin musicians who answered a casting-call advertisement. They're a vivacious and spontaneous crew. The screenplay is by Dick Clement, Ian La Frenais, and Roddy Doyle, from Doyle's novel. The songs are great—chosen, with unusual intelligence, from the repertoires of Otis Redding, Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett, and other soul giants.—T.R. (8/26/91) (Angelika Film Center, Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, and Ziegfeld.)

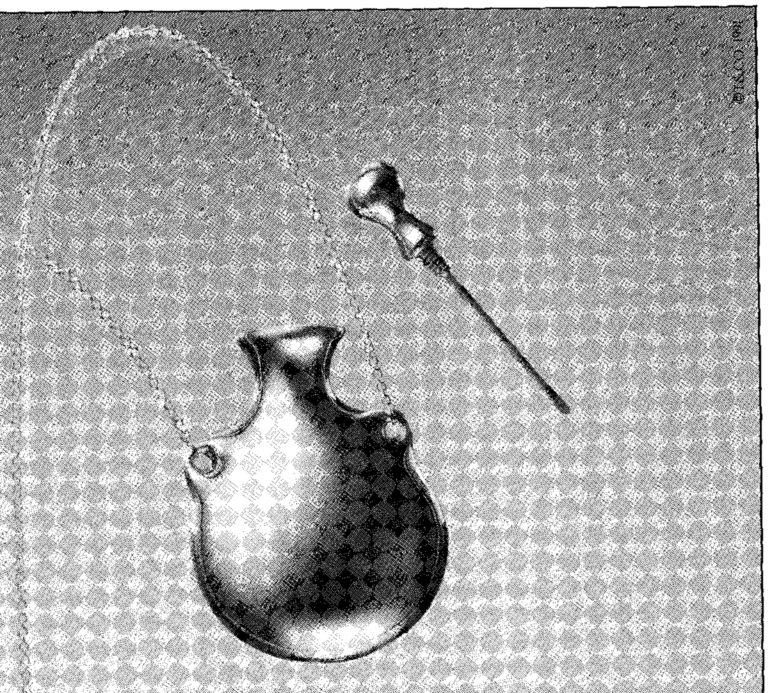
Dead Again—This murder mystery, directed by Kenneth Branagh from a wildly complicated screenplay by Scott Frank, wears its inanity on its sleeve. It shuttles breezily between the present day, in which an L.A. detective named Mike Church (Branagh) is trying to discover the identity of an attractive amnesiac (Emma Thompson), and the late forties, in which a European composer and conductor (also Branagh) may or may not have murdered his pianist wife (also Thompson). These stories are, of course, connected: the amnesiac might even be a reincarnation of the conductor's wife, stabbed to death with a pair of scissors forty years earlier. Branagh makes no attempt to disguise the script's preposterousness. He revels in it, both as actor and as director. The mood of the picture is both frivolous and spooky, and the suspense often seems a function of sheer giddiness: as the movie dances, with drunken insouciance, toward the simultaneous climaxes of its two stories, the tension we feel is partly fear that Branagh won't be able to maintain his precarious balance. Finally, the picture does come crashing down. When it's time to wrap up the mystery, the movie leaves too many of the plot's enigmas unresolved, and Branagh's insouciance loses its charm. Also with Derek Jacobi, Andy Garcia, Hanna Schygulla, and (in a hilarious cameo) Robin Williams.—T.R. (9/9/91) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, Loews Festival, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

Death in Venice (1971)—The beginning—with the boat carrying the weary, over-disciplined Aschenbach (Dirk Bogarde) to Venice—is magnificent. It's like a series of views by Boudin, only more voluptuous. But sometimes a picture's triumphs work against it more than its failures do: how can the director, Luchino Visconti, surpass this long virtuoso opening—how can he organize the movie so that it has balance and proportion? Once Aschenbach falls in love with the androgynous fourteen-year-old boy Tadzio (Bjorn Andresen) and dyes his hair and rouges his cheeks, the picture seems to end over and over again. In the Thomas Mann short novel, Aschenbach (who was based on Mahler) was made a writer; Visconti (and his co-writer Nicola Badalucco) turn him into a composer, and use Mahler's Third and Fifth Symphonies on the soundtrack. That works well, but Visconti overelaborates the story, adding flashbacks with discussions about art and adding a character (Alfred, played by Mark Burns), who's a disastrous intrusion. After a while the languor experienced by Aschenbach is experienced by the audience as plain pokiness. And though it isn't Bogarde's fault, this English actor (made up to suggest Mann) diminishes the whole conception; he's not a stiff, overworked German—he just seems dull and prissy, and there's no real horror in his painted face or his ridiculous behavior. There are superb visual contributions by the art director Ferdinando Scarfiotti, and the costume designer Piero Tosi. (The time is 1911.) The cast includes the sumptuously turned out Silvana Mangano as Tadzio's mother and Franco Fabrizi, Romolo Valli, Marisa Berenson, and the ravishing Carol André as the whore Esmeralda. Some of the post-synching is very poor.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Oct. 25-26.)

The Doctor—Although it's sure to hook some viewers who want to see the medical establishment get knocked, this is no exposé —it's yet another story of identity crisis in the professional class, a fraternal, if not identical, twin of "Regarding Henry." William Hurt plays the surgical golden boy who develops a case of galloping humanity after he's diagnosed with throat cancer; Christine Lahti and Charlie Korsmo play his neglected wife and son; Elizabeth Perkins is the life-force who inspires him (she's suffering from a Grade IV brain tumor); and, in matched parts, Mandy Patinkin is a callous Jewish doctor (Hurt's longtime partner) and Adam Arkin is a saintly Jewish doctor (who shows Hurt correct values). The director, Randa Haines, titillates the audience with a barrage of doctors' jokes and then tries to prove that the cynical professionalism of hospital staffs is no laughing matter. In effect, the movie goes from comic shtick to problem-drama shtick, and fuses them. Hurt's performance is the type usually described as "accomplished," but what exactly does it accomplish? It's a careful embodiment of a clammed-up individual; not a hint of zest or dirt or soulfulness seeps out. The script, credited to Robert Caswell, is loosely based on "A Taste of My Own Medicine," by Ed Rosenbaum, M.D.—M.S. (Gramercy.)

The Earrings of Madame de . . . (1953)—Perfection. This tragedy of love, which begins in narcissistic flirtation and passes from romance to passion to desperation, is set, ironically, in aristocratic circles that seem too superficial to take love tragically. The very beauty of Max Ophuls' film is sometimes used against it: the gliding, sensuous camerawork, the extraordinary romantic atmosphere, the gowns, the balls, the chandeliers, the nuances of language, and the sense of honor are regarded as evidence of lack of substance. But Ophuls loved Mozart and Stendhal, and he also calls up a third master: the opera sequence that gives the film its musical theme is Gluck's "Orfeo." The performances by Danielle Darrieux as Madame de, by Charles Boyer as her husband, Monsieur de, a general, and by Vittorio De Sica as her lover, the Baron, are quite likely the finest each has given. Ophuls' lush, decorative style, his re-creation of a vanished elegance, and his darting, swirling camera are used to evoke the protection that style and manners and wealth provide, and to demonstrate that passion can destroy it all. With Jean Debucourt as the jeweler, and Lia de Lea as the general's mistress. Based on Louise de Vilmorin's novella "Madame de . . . ," which is far more astringent than the film; the script is by Marcel Achard, Annette Wademant, and Ophuls. Cinematography by Christian Matras; sets by Jean d'Eaubonne. In French. —P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Oct. 29.)

Eating—All the action in Henry Jaglom's film takes place at the fortieth-birthday party of a Southern California woman named Helene (Lisa Richards), and all the characters—thirty-eight of them—are women. None of the women at this party—with the exception of Helene's mother (Frances Bergen), who represents the values of an older generation—can eat without guilt; several of them have clinical eating disorders, for which they hate themselves. Jaglom films them in hi



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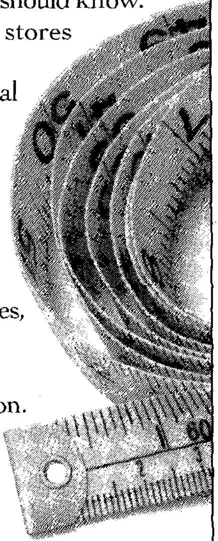

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usual group-therapy style: the camera remains fixed as characters lob banal confessions and accusations at each other. This is meant to create the illusion of raw emotional truth, but the bulimics' ball Jaglom throws here isn't much of a party, and it's bad therapy, too. Whatever Jaglom may have intended, his film winds up trivializing its theme and humiliating its subjects. He's advertising the movie as "A Very Serious Comedy About Women and Food," but its "serious" message is glibly offensive, and there's nothing funny about it.—T.R. (5/20/91) (Cinema Village 12th Street.)

Europa Europa—This superb film by the Polish director Agnieszka Holland is based on the memoirs of Salomon Perel, a German Jew who spent much of the Second World War passing for Aryan in an élite Hitler Youth academy. The movie dramatizes this almost inconceivable survival story with a surprisingly light touch. It bounds from one jaw-dropping episode to the next with the speed and the unnerving neutrality of a picaresque adventure, and never pauses to judge its ambiguous hero; it's content to let the ironies of his situation collect around him like reflections in dressing-room mirrors. His family's flight from the Nazis begins in 1938, on the eve of his bar mitzvah. Solly (played by a remarkable young actor, Marco Hofschneider) lands first in Lodz, Poland, and then in the Soviet Union, where he becomes a star pupil in a Communist school. After the Wehrmacht invades Russia and takes him prisoner, he reincarnates himself as an orphaned "pure" German, an Aryan child wandering in the barbaric eastern wilderness. By the time he is initiated into the Hitler Youth, he has already run through several identities, and has proved himself capable of playing his roles with conviction and enthusiasm. We remain, however, constantly aware (as he is) of what his Nazi disguise conceals—his circumcised penis, the irreversible and unambiguous sign of his identity as a Jew. Holland uses this physical evidence of Solly's Jewishness as the fulcrum of the movie's delicately balanced narrative and moral tensions. Also with Julie Delpy, Andre Wilms, Halina Labonarska, and Rene Hofschneider. The real Salomon Perel appears, as himself, in the movie's final scene. In German and Russian.—T.R. (7/1/91) (Lincoln Plaza.)

The Fisher King—This one-hundred-and-thirty-seven-minute endurance test is the story of a former New York City "shock jock" (Jeff Bridges) who befriends a schizoid former medievalist (Robin Williams) and joins his quest for the Holy Grail. The gonzo filigree of the director, Terry Gilliam, surrounds this fable of redemption with pseudo-originality. The allusion-mongering of the writer, Richard LaGravenese, gives it delusions of grandeur. At heart, the film is no different from a whole string of Hollywood movies centering on mysterious madmen who may be legendary heroes. As usual for this drippy kind of film, Williams' throwback character, Parry—short for Parsifal—is supposed to inspire everybody with his virtuous whimsies. But Gilliam doesn't know how to give the fantasy any sentimental charm, and he's hell on the actors, including Mercedes Ruehl as Bridges' earthy lover and Amanda Plummer as Williams' gawky amorous ideal. They mug; Gilliam takes mug shots. The movie is a peculiarly irritating failure—a leaden piece of uplift.—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Frankie & Johnny—The movie version of Terrence McNally's 1987 play "Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune" is a sweet-tempered romantic comedy whose main characters are a New York coffee-shop waitress, Frankie (Michelle Pfeiffer), and a short-order cook, Johnny (Al Pacino). McNally, adapting his two-character play for the screen, has expanded and drastically rearranged his original story. He and the director, Garry Marshall, have attempted to place Frankie and Johnny in a variety of settings, to stretch the narrative out over a longer period, to surround the lovers with lots of other people—and to incorporate all this extra material without dissipating the emotional tensions of the main characters' relationship. Although the new characters and settings sometimes give the movie the feel of a sitcom, the filmmakers keep the basic principles of romantic comedy in view, and the stars' performances elevate the material. Pacino brings out the comedy and the ambiguity of a middle-aged man's sense of emotional rebirth: he's exuberant, touching, and a little scary. And Pfeiffer is extraordinary; her Frankie is a superbly detailed rendering of a woman with a fanatically conservative heart. The strength of the play was its simplicity and its directness; the movie preserves those qualities by telling the story in the ordinary, straightforward Hollywood manner. This is a vehicle for Pacino and Pfeiffer, and they're more glamorous than the characters they're playing, but, in a weird way, their star power is perfectly appropriate here: it's the meat-and-potatoes stuff of big-budget movie entertainment. Kate Nelligan and Nathan Lane are standouts in a large supporting cast, which also includes Hector Elizondo and Jane Morris.—T.R. (10/21/91) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, U. A. East, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Loews Astor Plaza.)

The Last Picture Show (1971)—This straightforward, involving, narrative picture about growing up in a small town in Texas in the early fifties was Peter Bogdanovich's first great success. It's plain and uncondescending in its re-creation of what it means to be a high-school athlete, of what a country dance hall is like, of the necking in cars and movie houses, and of the desolation that follows high-school graduation. Concerned with adolescent experience seen in terms of flatlands anomie—loneliness, ignorance about sex, confusion about one's aims in life—the movie has a basic decency of feeling, with people relating to one another, sometimes on very simple levels, and becoming miserable when they can't relate. Robert Surtees' stylized cinematography is in black-and-white, and the frequent silhouetting—so that we seem to be looking at a map of life as it was—helps to clarify the subject matter. The film badly needs this stylization, because, of course, its shallow overview of town life is dangerously close to TV, and especially to the "Peyton Place" series. The movie suggests what TV soap opera would be if it looked at ordinary experience in a non-exploitative way, if it had observation and humor. This is perhaps an *ideal* TV show. From Larry McMurtry's novel, adapted by McMurtry together with the director. With Timothy Bottoms, Jeff Bridges, Ellen Burstyn, Cybill Shepherd, Ben Johnson, Eileen Brennan, and Cloris Leachman. (A sequel, "Texasville," also directed by Bogdanovich, was released in 1990.)—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 27.)

Letter from an Unknown Woman (1948)—Joan Fontaine suffers and suffers, but so *exquisitely* in this romantic evocation of late-nineteenth-century Vienna that one doesn't know whether to clobber the poor, wronged creature or to give in and weep. Max Ophuls made this film in Hollywood but its Vienna is as romantically stylized and as beautifully textured as his European work. His theme (it was almost always his theme) is the difference in approaches to love. A pianist, Louis Jourdan, seduces the impressionable adolescent Joan and promptly forgets her; years later he meets her again, and, thinking her a fresh conquest, seduces her again. But in the intervening years she has borne him a child and remained hopelessly in love with him. This ironic love story, which is probably the toniest "woman's picture" ever made, is based on Stefan Zweig's "Brief Einer Unbekannten" and was written for the screen by Howard Koch. With Mady Christians. Cinematography by Franz Planer; art direction by Alexander Golitzen.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 24.)

Little Man Tate—Fred Tate (Adam Hann-Byrd) is a seven-year-old intellectual prodigy who lives with his single, working-class mother, Dede (Jodie Foster). The screenplay, by Scott Frank, presents the young hero as one unhappy whiz kid: Fred's public-school education doesn't challenge him, and his classmates treat him like a freak. Nobody comes to his birthday party. The picture (which was directed by Foster) is frustrating because it seems reluctant to explore with any rigor the special problems that a boy like Fred might have. The filmmakers keep falling back on pathos and on the easy irony that the main character is, despite his extraordinary gifts, an ordinary boy with the normal emotional needs of any seven-year-old. By the end of the movie, his precocious intelligence has lost its distinctive qualities, and he's no more than an exotic variant of a standard type: the lonely, misunderstood kid who yearns for love and acceptance. Our interest in Fred actually diminishes in the course of the picture; Frank and Foster introduce a unique hero and then spend two hours stripping him of his individuality. Also with Dianne Wiest, David Pierce, P. J. Ochlan, and Harry Connick, Jr.—T.R. (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews New York Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

My Own Private Idaho—The third feature by the independent filmmaker Gus Van Sant ("Mala Noche," "Drugstore Cowboy") is like an exploded version of the previous two, and it scatters meanings all over the landscape. It's a beautiful disaster, like a bomb test in the middle of nowhere. The movie is set primarily in Van Sant's familiar territory—the seedier parts of Portland, Oregon—and its main characters are a pair of young hustlers, Mike (River Phoenix) and Scott (Keanu Reeves), who sell their bodies on the

In production terms, the flying epic "Hell's Angels" (playing October 30, at Theatre 80 St. Marks) was the "Apocalypse Now" of its era. Filming started in 1927, after its producer-director, Howard Hughes, had searched the globe for First World War aircraft. He employed scores of pilots and more than a hundred mechanics, established an imitation-English airbase in Van Nuys and an imitation-German one in Chatsworth, and poured an estimated two million dollars into the aerial combat alone. When sound came in, he decided that his spectacle (in black-and-white, originally with color sequences) would be naked without it. He replaced the Norwegian actress Greta Nissen with Jean Harlow, and signed the stage-trained director James Whale to guide the new dialogue scenes. The result came out in 1930, and it was a hit. But Hughes had spent too much money to turn a profit.

The film would have been better if Hughes had kept it silent. Joseph Moncure March's dialogue, embellishing the already ludicrous screenplay by March, Marshall Neilan, Howard Estabrook, and Harry Behn, provided enough gas to float several hot-air balloons. James Hall and Ben Lyon play moral and hedonistic brothers, respectively, and Harlow is the feckless society gal who drives them both crazy; at one point she proclaims, "Life's short, and I want to live *while I'm alive!" Hughes does make good on the movie's raison d'être: the risky exhilaration of flight and the boggling power of air warfare. There are a couple of great scenes. In one—a nocturnal zeppelin attack—a German dirigible parts the clouds over London like an airborne blue whale. The other is a rousing battle punctuated by dives and crashes, including a head-on collision in the sky. Hughes shows the chaos of pitched fighting and the darting, intermittent clarity of the aviators' point of view. He puts you in the pilot's seat.*

C.BRODOWSKI

Jean Harlow and Ben Lyon in 'Hell's Angels"

street. Mike is a narcoleptic: every time he blacks out, he has lyrical dreams composed of imagery from his childhood. Scott, who is the son of Portland's mayor, is modeled on Shakespeare's Prince Hal; the Falstaff character here is a scruffy gay cokehead called Bob (William Richert), and his scenes with Scott are stylized variations of incidents from both parts of "Henry IV" (hence also variations on Orson Welles' "Chimes at Midnight"). Van Sant takes a lot of chances, and, visually, the movie is so imaginative, so fiercely alive, that it carries us along. But when the over-all design of the picture becomes clear, we feel cheated rather than enlightened. Scott turns into a villain; Bob is ennobled as a symbol of outlaw freedom; and Mike takes on the aura of a holy fool, the Prince Myshkin of the Portland meat market. Van Sant's vision is disappointingly trite and schematic. Phoenix, however, gives a superbly intelligent and intuitive performance. The original screenplay is by Van Sant. Eric Alan Edwards and John Campbell did the cinematography.—T.R. (10/[illegible]/91) (Plaza, and Waverly.)

Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves—A dull, dutiful trek through the legend of the bandit of Sherwood Forest, who stole from the rich and gave to the poor. We never feel that anyone involved in making this multimillion-dollar, two-hour-and-twenty-one-minute spectacle had any real affection for the story. The screenplay, by Pen Densham and John Watson, is a mishmash of halfhearted dramatizations of episodes from the legend and equally halfhearted nods to contemporary attitudes. If the movie had an exuberant spirit—as the 1938 "Adventures of Robin Hood," with Errol Flynn, had, in near-manic overabundance—we'd be more inclined to overlook the script's incoherence. But there's not much joy in evidence here. The direction, by Kevin Reynolds, is stolid and impersonal, and Kevin Costner seems miscast as Robin: he's not a forceful enough actor for this role. The merry men are an unmemorable lot; even Little John (Nick Brimble) and Friar Tuck (Michael McShane) don't make strong impressions, because they haven't been given anything interesting to do. (In this version, Little John *loses* his famous battle with Robin in the stream.) The audience seems to perk up only when Alan Rickman, as the villainous Sheriff of Nottingham, is on the screen. He gives a florid, theatrical performance—there's real glee in his malice. Also with Morgan Freeman, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, Christian Slater, Michael Wincott, and Brian Blessed (who's so vivid in his brief scenes as Robin's father that we wish the movie were about him instead.)—T.R. (7/1/91) (Worldwide Cinemas.)

Scarface (1932)—The gangster classic, with Paul Muni as the dangerous hood with the scar on his cheek, and dark, huge-eyed Ann Dvorak as his sister. The writer, Ben Hecht, and the director, Howard Hawks, said that they wrote the story by treating the Capone family "as if they were the Borgias set down in Chicago." Overall, it's a terrific movie, even though the pacing doesn't always seem quite right. The opening sequence is a beauty: the camera moves from a street lamp with stylized skyscrapers in the background and follows a milkman into a speakeasy, where we see the remnants of a gangland New Year's Eve party and finally pick up the shadow of Scarface, who kills the gangland leader. The film's violence has the crazy, helter-skelter feeling of actual gun battles, and Paul Muni, with a machine gun in his arms, is brutal and grotesque, in a primal, childlike, fixating way. The cast includes George Raft, Osgood Perkins, Karen Morley, Boris Karloff, Vince Barnett, Edwin Maxwell, C. Henry Gordon, Tully Marshall, Henry Armetta, and Purnell Pratt. The story, based on a novel by Armitage Trail, is credited to Hecht, and the continuity and dialogue to Seton I. Miller, John Lee Mahin, and W. R. Burnett. The cinematography is by Lee Garmes and L. W. O'Connell. The film was ready for release in 1930, but was held up for two years by censorship problems; the scene in the publisher's office wasn't directed by Hawks—it was inserted to appease pressure groups. The title "Scarface" bore the subtitle "Shame of the Nation."—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 30.)

The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe—Trudy, a crazy bag lady, has taken upon herself the task of showing visiting extraterrestrials the variety of life on earth. She has an umbrella hat that picks up signals from everywhere and turns her into a living TV set, with lots of channels and great reception. She's played by Lily Tomlin, and every person whose life flashes onto Trudy's psychic screen is played by Lily Tomlin, too. Tomlin gives us a clear, sharp picture every time: she's a high-definition actress. This astonishing one-woman show, presented on Broadway in 1985, was written for Tomlin by her longtime collabotator Jane Wagner. The belated film version, directed by John Bailey, adds some distracting visual effects, but it mostly does justice to the extraordinary talents of these women. Nothing interferes with the dazzling rhythm of Tomlin's performance, and the piece is constructed so that its themes build up an inexorable momentum. The characters who flash across the screen turn out, in the end, to be connected to each other in ways we couldn't have anticipated. And it's immensely gratifying to see all the different personalities gathered together in one woman. This is probably the only solo theatrical performance that truly deserves to be called democratic.—T.R. (10/7/91) (57th St. Playhouse.)

Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll—A one-man show in which Eric Bogosian plays, in succession, ten characters, none of whom interact with or refer to any of the others; each inhabits his own eerily self-contained world. The surprising thing about this acting tour de force is that its radically disparate parts really add up to something: in rock-and-roll terms, it's a concept album, not just a collection of singles. This picture, directed (erratically) by John McNaughton, was filmed in concert-movie style, with multiple cameras and before a paying crowd, and Bogosian looks relaxed and confident. In the past, his performances often felt desperate, coercive; he seems more willing now to allow the audience some freedom in responding to his characters. There's a real progression in the course of the film, from characters who provoke immediate, visceral reactions to characters whose effect on us is more ambiguous. Bogosian warms us up with surefire stuff to prepare us for the riskier, more demanding material in the final part of the show. His last three monologues are the funniest in the movie—probably the finest work he has ever done.—T.R. (9/23/91) (Angelika Film Center, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

Slacker—There is no joy in Austin—at least not in the seedy collegiate neighborhood of Richard Linklater's enervating piece of local colorlessness. There's precious little originality, either, despite the resolute nonconformity of Linklater's neo-beatnik characters. Each follows the familiar beat of a different bongo. Sociopaths, Elvis, the J.F.K. assassination, the Lincoln Brigade, Madonna—the same topics come up off campus in Austin as in Cambridge, Mass., or Madison. What's worse, the sophomoric surrealism of the slackers' dialogue is all that Linklater gives you to hang onto. With dozens of one-shot characters who take over for a scene, then pass the baton to the next no-brain, the structure begs comparison to Buñuel's late black comedies, like "The Phantom of Liberty." But watching this movie is more like being stranded in the switchboard of a nightmare party line. It's tempting to call the film a straightfaced satire, but that would give it too much credit. There's nothing inside Linklater's deadpan.—M.S. (Quad Cinema.)

Stepping Out—Liza Minnelli is the tap-dance teacher Mavis Turner; her students include Andrea Martin, Bill Irwin, Ellen Greene, Jane Krakowski, and Julie Walters; her practice pianist is Shelley Winters. But whenever this energetic ensemble musters any vaudevillian spunk the wan musical dramedy reduces it to a dribble of cozy or heart-tugging feelings. "Your dreams are just a step away," reads the ad line. Dream on, moviemakers, dream on. The only cast member completely untouched by cuteness or bathos is Nora Dunn. As Mavis's hoity-toity antagonist in the Buffalo, N.Y., dance world, she provides a splendid caricature of smugness, arrogance, and condescension. Lewis Gilbert produced and directed Richard Harris's adaptation of his own stage play; Danny Daniels did the skilled yet insipid choreography (it's best when the cast is just bumbling around).—M.S. (8th St. Playhouse, and Cinema 3. . . . ¶ Loews Paramount; through Oct. 24.)

The Super—The worst kind of in-your-face farce. Joe Pesci stars as a slumlord sentenced to a hundred and twenty days in his own dilapidated tenement while he corrects housing violations. Rubén Blades and Kenny Blank co-star as the tenants who do the most to redeem him, while Vincent Gardenia goes volcanically over the top as Pesci's avaricious father. Underneath the scabrous class and racial humor, Sam Simon's script is supposed to convey a heartwarming message: that in a multicultural atmosphere even a scum can clean up his act and learn to love his fellowman. But it's a non-stop screech of a movie, with Pesci butting up against the other performers like an angry base runner in an argument at home plate. That effect is particularly unsettling when he's making a play for the lovely, too-little-seen Madolyn Smith Osborne, as the housing-authority counsel who puts him away. Rod Daniel directed.—M.S. (34th St. East, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Olympia, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Manhattan Twin; through Oct. 22. . . . ¶ Art Greenwich Twin; through Oct. 24.)

Terminator 2: Judgment Day—The killer cyborg who was played by Arnold Schwarzenegger in the original "Terminator" (1984) has returned—only this time he's the hero. The first film, which was written and directed by James Cameron, is one of the genre-movie classics of the eighties: a lean, witty science-fiction movie without great pretensions to significance. The sequel, also written (with William Wisher) and directed by Cameron, is far less satisfying. The picture is full of spectacular action sequences and dazzling special effects, but the narrative doesn't have the snap of the original's: it's lumbering and monotonous, and it carries a heavy-handed anti-nuke message. The old, Schwarzenegger-model Terminator (the T-800) has been superseded by a more advanced model, the T-1000 (Robert Patrick), who is sleeker and more versatile. T-800, who represented the ultimate in destructive technology in the first film, seems almost human here: compared to T-1000, he's a vulnerable guy (or guyoid). The whole movie is based on the insane conceit that Arnold Schwarzenegger is the *underdog*. That's a stretch.—T.R. (7/29/91) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Art Greenwich Twin, Olympia, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ 86th Street East Twin. Evenings only.)

Too Bad She's Bad (1955)—Alberto Moravia's divertissement on the cops-and-robbers theme features a prodigious family of thieves—father Vittorio De Sica is a dignified and accomplished pickpocket, his big pussycat daughter Sophia Loren is a happy delinquent who can't understand people who work for a living, and his two little sons can strip an automobile in thirty seconds flat. As several critics pointed out, this comedy has only one drawback: when the magnificent Sophia sails across the screen, one forgets to read the subtitles. With Marcello Mastroianni. Directed by Alessandro Blasetti. In Italian.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Oct. 29.)

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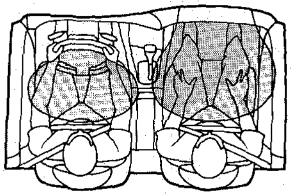

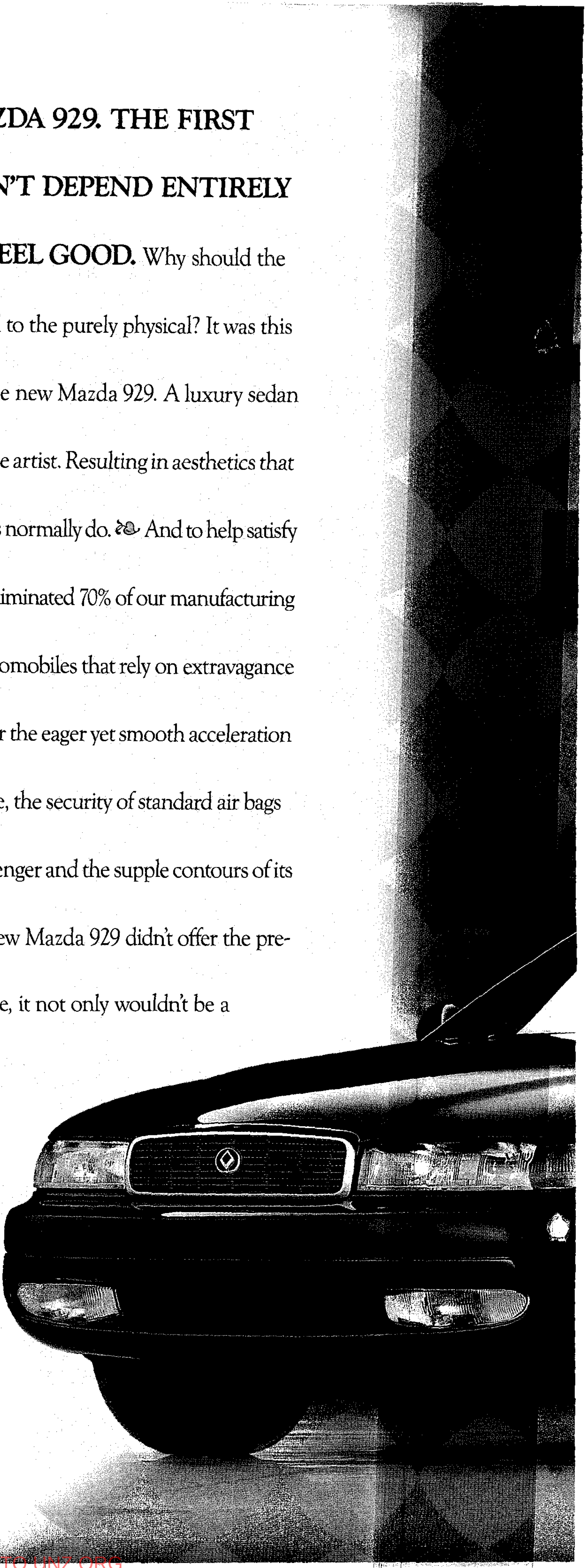

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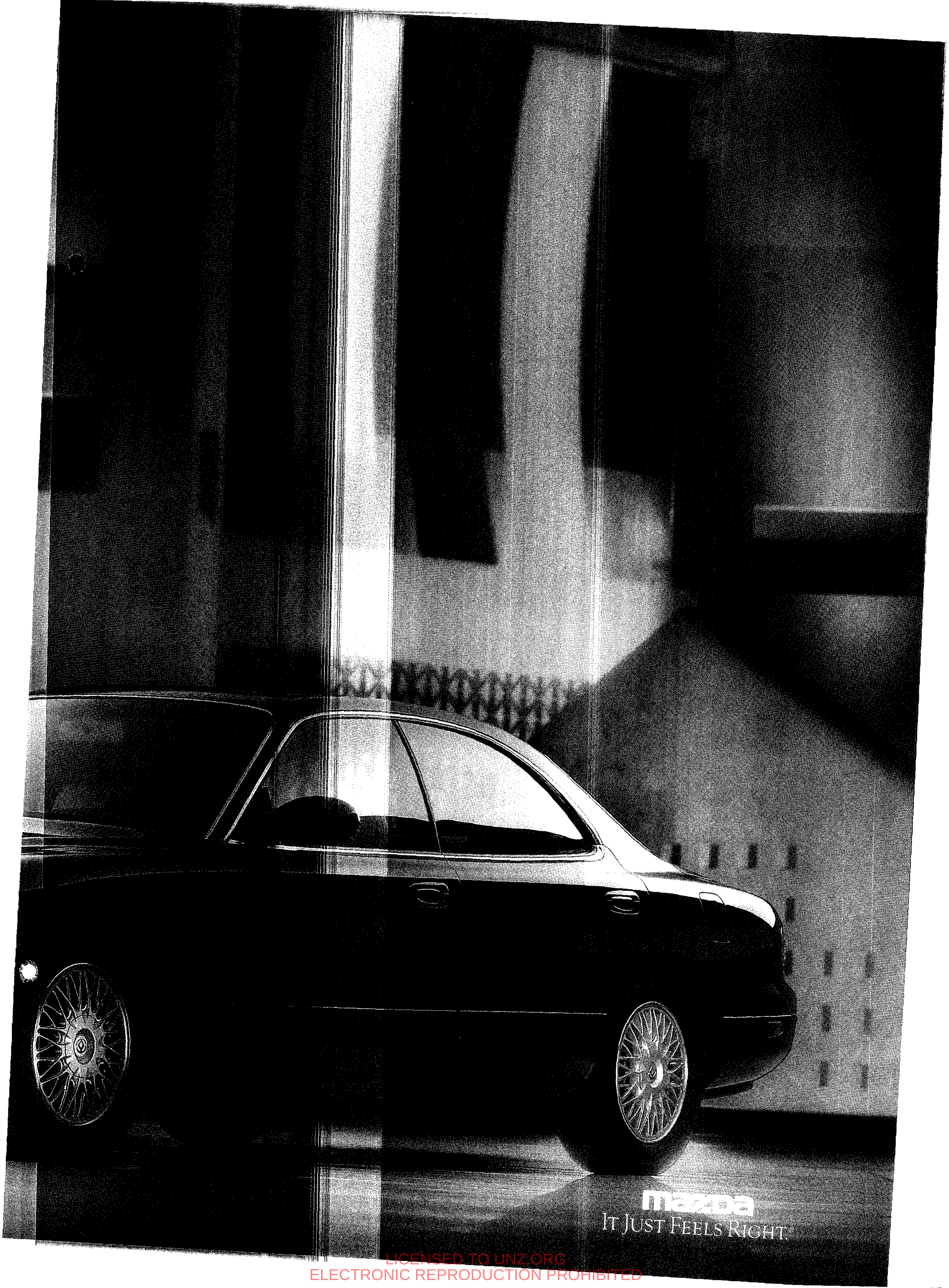
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THE
NEW YORKER

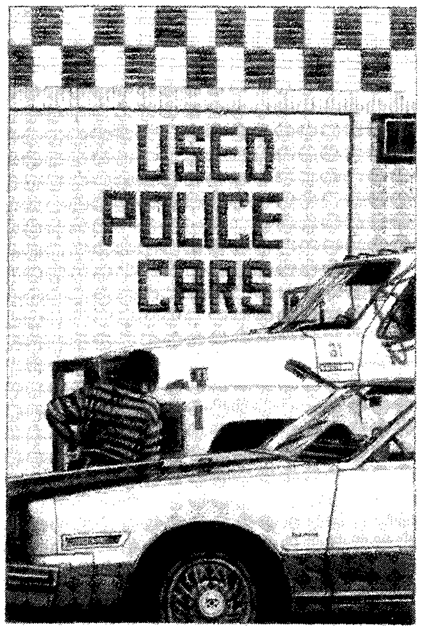
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

FOR seventy-two hours last week, everyone in America was thinking like a novelist. No matter where you went or whom you talked to, the conversation always seemed to turn to the story of Clarence Thomas, the federal judge nominated by President Bush to serve on the Supreme Court, and Anita Hill, the Oklahoma law professor who testified that Thomas had sexually harassed her when she worked for him, in the early nineteen-eighties. So many ideas of decency and fair-mindedness were brutalized during those three days, and so many feelings of anger and resentment were exposed, that it became almost a therapeutic necessity to invent a narrative that might give some meaning to events that were being experienced as a kind of psychic explosion.

The hastily organized Senate Judiciary Committee hearings that followed the revelation of Hill's accusation were attacked almost immediately by many of Thomas's supporters—and, with considerable force and bitterness, by Thomas himself, when he made his electrifying appearance before the committee on Friday night—as a travesty, a hopelessly misconceived attempt to use a political process to settle a dispute about facts. By the end of the weekend, even those who did not wish the nomination well had come to feel the same way, for the hearings became a political free-for-all, in which senators demonstrated a willingness to stoop to anything, from cheap prosecutorial trickery to outright smears, in order to impeach witnesses whose evidence served the cause of the other side. When Senator Alan Simpson announced that he had in his pocket communications containing damaging "stuff" about Professor Hill, it was impossible not to be reminded of another senator, forty-one years ago, in Wheeling, West Virginia, waving a sheet of paper supposed to contain the names of two hundred and five Communists working in the State Department. The Democratic inquisitors, too, showed themselves fully capable of deplorable tactics—as when Senator Howard Metzenbaum, late on the final night of hearings, went out of his way to try to put on the record an unsubstantiated smear against one witness, John Doggett, whose testimony had already been discredited under questioning by the committee's chairman, Senator Joseph Biden.

Yet even if the committee had been able to put politics to one side, and to observe a proper investigative decorum in its efforts to uncover the facts, it would probably never have been able to satisfy the general desire to know what had really taken place between Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill. As the hearings went on, it began to seem to many people that the truth in this matter lay somewhere beyond the reach of legal processes: clearly, someone was lying, and it may be that only the two principals will ever know which one it was. To understand how Thomas and Hill had come to this moment in their lives, one needed not a history of facts but a history of consciousnesses. And this is why so many Americans found themselves, when they tried to explain the matter to one another, sounding like novelists.



Some of the novelizing was merely sensational. In one frequently heard version, Hill nurses a passion for Thomas, and his indifference leads her finally, after years of hope, to stage her terrible revenge. This story is particularly flimsy because it is sustained by so little evidence, and because it leaves so many strands dangling—such as the testimony from several witnesses that Hill had complained about sexual harassment almost from the beginning of her association with Thomas. And Hill's demeanor, as it appeared on television, was missing the gleam of spitefulness that a tale of spurned love requires. You could sometimes hear a more gothic variation of the story, in which Hill and Thomas had once been lovers—though when the puzzle was framed in this way almost none of the pieces could be made to fit.

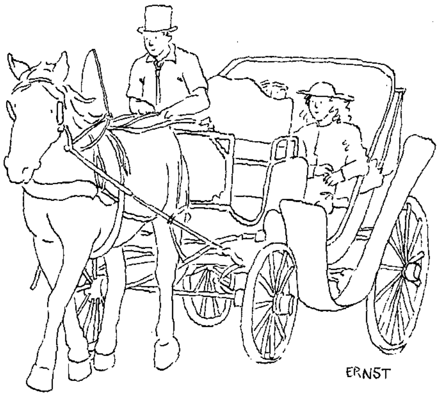
Conspiratorial versions, modelled on political thrillers, also came forth, and they were no less shoddily constructed—despite an endorsement from Thomas himself, who implied during his testimony that he had been made the victim of a cleverly designed plot. But as Hill's political conservatism became more obvious, tales involving unscrupulous Senate staffers and liberal advocacy groups (with, as Senator Orrin Hatch put it, their "slick lawyers, the *worst kind*") were heard less often. So were this story's more baroque versions, in which Hill's complaint is leaked to the press by Republicans, who then use it as a stick to beat the Democrats, or in which the Democrats deliberately lose the contest over Thomas, in order to drive female voters away from President Bush in the next election. There was undoubtedly some skulduggery behind the events that flushed Professor Hill into public view, but political machinations were not where the real drama lay.

The term "Dickensian" turned up in many conversations about the hearings, but only the senators, so rigidly encased in their public personalities and so fantastically uncensored in their utterances, seemed truly Dickensian. Thomas and Hill were never Dickensian, and neither (except, perhaps, for Mr. Doggett and Charles Kothe, the retired law-school dean from Oral Roberts University) were the other witnesses. The feeling that there must be an element of the demonic in the story—whether in the enormity of Hill's inventions (if she was making it all up) or in the fury of Thomas's denials (if he was lying)—led some people, including members of the committee, to use the word "tragedy," and others to mention Kafka (as Thomas himself did). But the outcome was neither tragic nor absurd. For such readings of the story to ring true, Thomas would have had to fall—either because his own past errors had returned in nightmare form to destroy him or because he had fatally misjudged the loyalty and character of a protégée—and he did not fall.

Thomas's success—if it can be called that, after the protracted and exhausting proceedings, and after he was made a Supreme Court justice for life by a margin of only four votes—is just what gives the event its extraordinary resonance. Hill and Thomas are enormous characters. This became clear during the testimonies of the corroborating witnesses—the men and women who were part of the world in which Hill and Thomas had once worked. Those witnesses seemed honest, genuine, and intelligent, but they appeared to be people more or less like the rest of us. Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas are not people like the rest of us, and it is perfectly obvious to those who doubt his denials why Thomas could have behaved toward Hill in ways he would never have behaved toward the women who spoke in his behalf—just as it is clear why Thomas's behavior toward her would matter far more deeply to Hill than the behavior of the other men in her circle. The man who muscled his way up from Pin Point, Georgia, with an unshakable belief in his own righteousness and the woman from Morris, Oklahoma, whose spiritual integrity is mixed with a fierce ambition must have recognized each other immediately. Whatever else their relationship involved, it must have included a test of wills, which made it unlike any ordinary office relationship.

No legal account can recognize this, of course. It cannot matter that Hill is a striking and exceptionally self-confident woman, or that Thomas is a forceful and exceptionally self-confident man. If he did those things to her, one continually heard, he must have done them to other women, too, or if she had invented this story about him, she must have invented things about other men as well. Everyone looked for "patterns." But characters like Thomas and Hill don't fit into patterns.

The people who ended by believing Thomas were able to cast the events as the story of a terrible ordeal successfully overcome. The people who believed Hill had a harder time justifying what happened. In the greatest novels—those, say, of Dostoyevski and Stendhal and James—the collision between truth and the world can have only one outcome, since the world will put on any mask, stoop to any deception, to protect itself, and truth cannot. Many people who were willing to believe Hill's story thought that she should have fought back when Thomas tried to harass her, or should have shrugged it off; and for some of these people the lies that Thomas had to tell (as they saw it) were a justifiable route around an obstacle he should never have had to confront. And if Hill was telling the truth it might be that Thomas, who by all accounts gave her in her subsequent career every professional assistance he could, felt that he had earned a reprieve from things he had, in a weak or uncalculating moment, once done to her. The anger he displayed before the committee would not have seemed so genuine, perhaps, if he had not, in some deep, Nixonian way justified his behavior to himself first. But Hill, although virtually abandoned by the senators who had forced on her the task of bringing down a Supreme Court nominee, stood her ground. She had never insisted on "winning," only on telling the truth, and, despite the opinion polls, she was not discredited. Still, for those who had hoped that Thomas's nomination would be defeated, the story has the wrong ending. It will not be a consolation to them to be reminded that all the great stories have the wrong ending.



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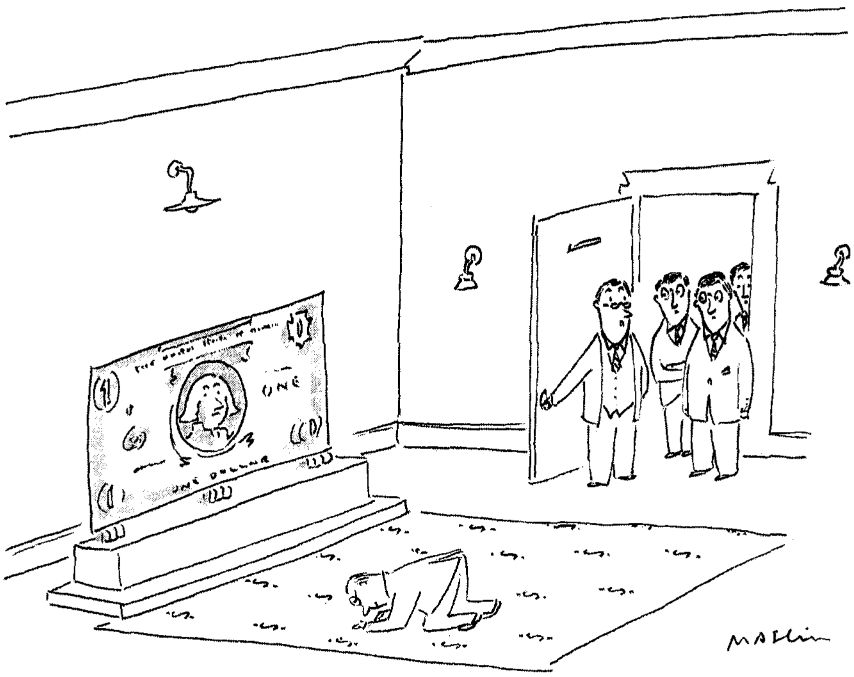
By the close of the hearings, there was wide agreement that the process of selecting Supreme Court justices had broken down, yielding a television event that made people feel shame and fear, anger and betrayal. Much of the blame for the failure of the process was levelled at the degraded state of American politics, but there was little discussion of the area of American life most at issue in a Supreme Court nomination—the law.

There is always a tension between law and politics, because the two are complementary instruments for shaping society. It's hard to say whether the civil-rights movement, for example, was animated more by law or by politics, and books about the movement are often lumped together in the more encompassing category of history. Politics may be more strongly influenced by law in the United States than in any other country, for this country's political direction was established by the Constitution and has been repeatedly altered by conscious expressions of popular will in the form of law, such as the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which doubled the number of black registered voters in the South within five years and changed the makeup of American politics. From the framing of the Constitution to the present, the law has, of course, reflected politics, but because American thinking has embodied a further tension—between faith in the wisdom of the majority and respect for the individual or for a minority whose interests might be trampled by the majority—some elements of law have been partly protected from politics.

Federal judges are given lifetime appointments to assure them of independence from political pressure—to leave them free to do what is lawful in controversial cases, no matter how unpopular the ruling. The law itself is meant to constrain the judges. The great judge Learned Hand once asked his law clerks, “To whom am I responsible?” Then he pointed to the shelves of his law library and said, “To these books around us! That's to whom I'm responsible!” Judges are accountable to the law, and the law, however it evolves, is meant to possess an integrity on which Americans can rely as they try to incorporate its provisions into the country's life and politics. The American system is distinguished by the need for the consent of the governed, which citizens usually express through politics, but the law is the compact between the people and their representatives, and in its own way it, too, depends on something akin to the mandate of democratic government—namely, consensus.

The battle over the Supreme Court nomination of Robert Bork revealed to the public a grave development that legal scholars had been observing for some time: a breakdown in consensus on the most basic American legal principles. As contradictory testimony at the Bork hearings from respected scholars on both sides demonstrated, the breakdown is about the checks and balances that the Constitution sets out for the three federal branches; about the meaning of the contents of the Constitution; and about how to apply tools of legal reasoning to interpret those contents today. More than any other event of the Reagan years, the Bork hearings emphasized how that Administration's approach to the law was the opposite of seeking consensus—how it sought to polarize American society. Though the Bork nomination was defeated, the problem of the breakdown in legal consensus has yet to be addressed.



“We've set aside this particular room for those who still worship the almighty dollar.”

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One effect of the breakdown is that the law is now almost always spoken of popularly in terms of outcomes that are indistinguishable from political ends. Whether a judicial nominee opposes a cause like abortion or affirmative action is now considered a legal question. Studies assess judges in terms of the causes they back or oppose, and find, for example, that appointees of the Reagan and Bush Administrations are far more likely than appointees of the Carter Administration to oppose the claims of criminal defendants, of environmentalists, or of civil-rights advocates.

Legal thinkers have tried to rationalize controversial decisions in terms of judicial philosophy, but the failure of their ideas to win public understanding and approval has reinforced the impression that the ends of law and of politics are the same. In the meantime, the style of politics perfected in the Reagan years has become the American standard in many areas of public decision other than judicial selection. It is a style that is nasty, base, and aggressive—hellbent on the achievement of ends, with scant concern about means. That was demonstrated in the Judiciary Committee's final hearings on the Thomas nomination, which made a mockery of legal safeguards.

Even without its excruciating coda, the Thomas saga was a bleak chapter in the debasement of both American politics and American law. President Bush nominated Judge Thomas for transparently political reasons; and for political reasons the Judiciary Committee initially held shapeless, often perfunctory hearings, which yielded little insight into the depth of the nominee's legal knowledge or the coherence of his judicial philosophy. Incapable of elevating politics, the law was dragged down further by it.

A generation ago, during political struggles over Supreme Court nominations the law seemed removed from the fray, as if its majesty shielded the Court from the process through which justices arrived there. Not in this era. If the full Thomas saga has taught us anything, it is that the Congress, the President, and the Supreme Court need to forge a new legal consensus. The prospects that they will do so any time soon seem dim, given a Republican President, a Democratic Congress, and a Supreme Court that is moving to the right of both of them. But if a new consensus is not reached, the law will increasingly become what cynical observers contend that it already is—just another tool of power.

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A YOUNG *man writes:*

I am one of that generation of men who grew up and were educated at a time when the central tenets of feminism were more or less dogma among right-thinking people, and I have spent my whole life among women who identify themselves as feminists. I have four sisters, each of whom is, in one way or another, engaged in living out a feminist life. My wife is a feminist filmmaker. My mother is a feminist professor—one of the first women of her generation to get a Ph.D. in formal logic. And yet, proud as I am of all these women, I had always felt, as almost every man surely does to one degree or another, that to be ardently or uncritically feminist was to become, in a sense, feminized, and I maintained a certain ironic distance from what struck me as the more metaphysical reaches of feminist "theory"—all those claims about women and power, women and language, and women and the male definition of reality which fill feminist texts and papers. But in the last three days, watching the Senate Judiciary Committee hearings on Judge Clarence Thomas, and watching the Senate's (and the press's) treatment of Professor Anita Hill, I have had something like a conversion experience. I have begun to realize that in the past the more "abstract" and the more categorical reaches of the feminist catechism—not to mention its now familiar nuts and bolts—seemed a little unreal to me not because they weren't true but because I had never seen them made concrete and particular.

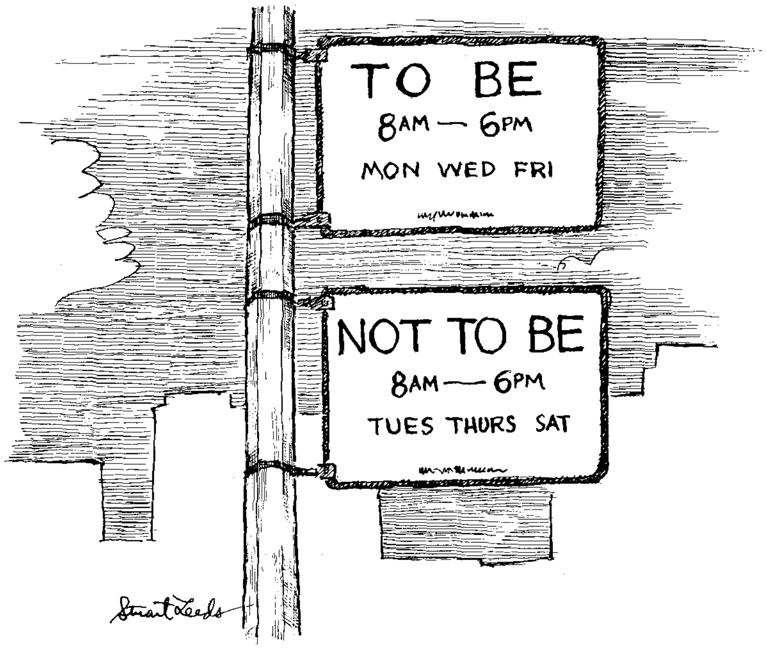
Women, I have long been told, live within a set of double binds. If a woman makes a charge against a man, the issue will always become not the man's behavior but the woman's character. And a corollary is that if a woman can be shown to have lied in the past about anything at all, the lie will be taken as compelling evidence that she may be lying now. On a Saturday-night news program, two male journalists invoked the names of *Tawana Brawley and Janet Cooke* while discussing the hearings, and then they had a long debate about which woman, Brawley or Cooke, Professor Hill more closely resembled—although no connection could be found between either the frightened teen-ager or the dishonest reporter and the college professor, whose integrity had not yet been impeached. *Of course* the comparison was apt, the two men seemed to assume: they're black, they're women, they lie.

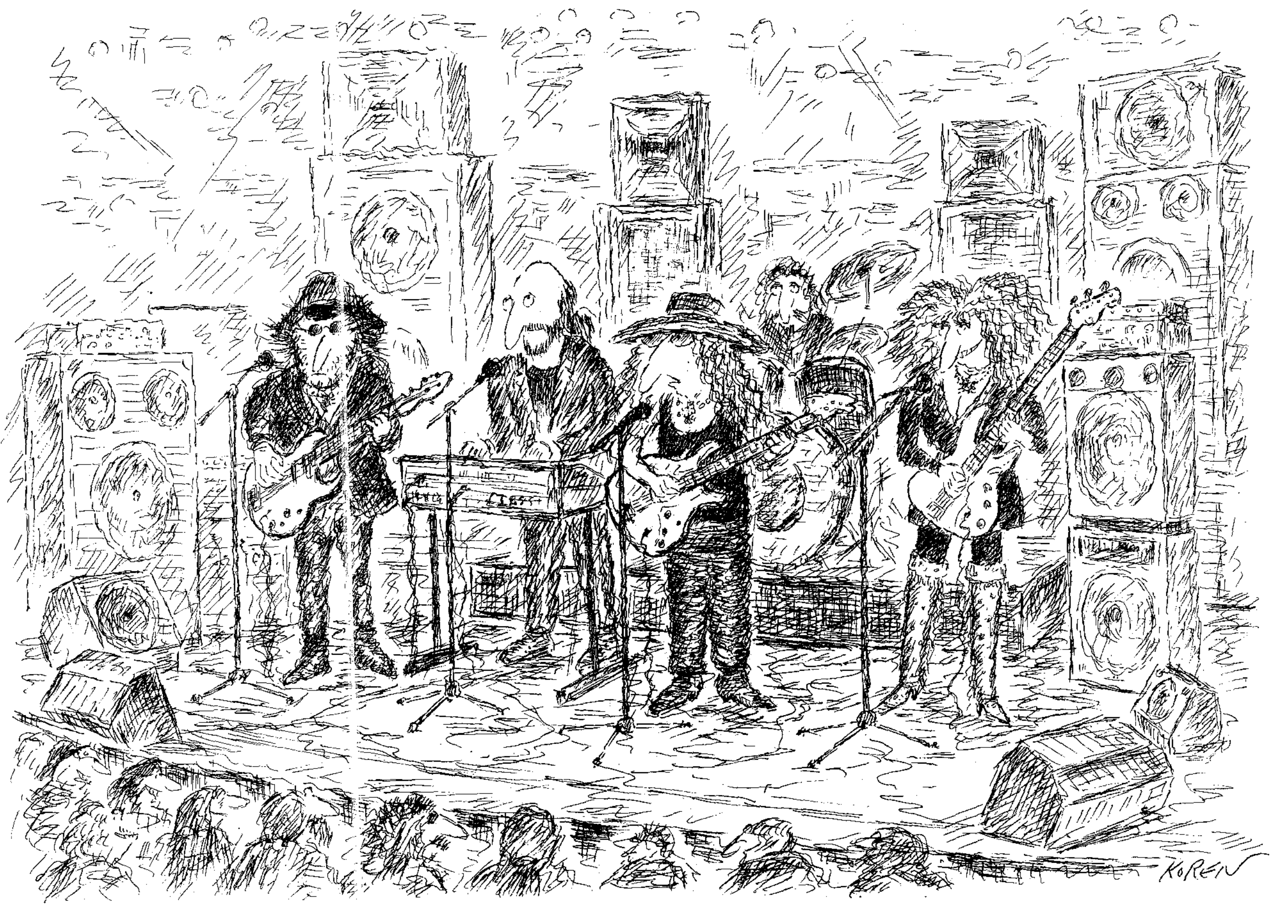
Women, my sisters explain, talk to other women not just to solve problems but to share pain, and this is not a difference of "conversational style" but is rooted in women's understanding of the realities of power. "Why didn't you give her advice? Why didn't you counsel her to come forward?" the incredulous senators demanded as the professor's friends tried to explain that after they heard her complaints of sexual harassment they had felt powerless to offer any solution. They had just tried to offer understanding and an ear, they said—that was what she *wanted* them to do, knowing that any "solution" would do at least as much damage to her as it could do to him. I will never forget the looks on the faces of Professor Hill's women friends—a judge and a welfare administrator—as they tried to explain why their friend hadn't come forward; they were the looks of pained and compassionate grownups trying to explain something to children.

Women must always be seen as powerless and passive, my sisters have pointed out, and any action they take will always be reinterpreted by men in this light. Grown men, including Judge Thomas himself, put forward in all seriousness the notion that Professor Hill was merely mouthing a "concocted" story that had been skillfully assembled from disparate sources by "special-interest groups" and then taught to her. In the minds of her accusers, Professor Hill could not even be granted the dignity of strategies of her own, however malicious; in order to be dismissed, she first had to be made a "pawn."

A woman's attractiveness will always be held against her, I now understand, and a woman's unattractiveness will always be held against her, too. Professor Hill was good-looking, and therefore it was fair to speculate that she was out to snare Judge Thomas, and that her accusation was the product of her failure to do so. But she wasn't *that* good-looking, and so it was also fair to conclude that the whole thing must be "fantasy." "Quite frankly, Anita Hill is not worth that type of risk," one of the Judge's supporters said—not good-looking enough to throw a career away on.

A man's career is assumed—by the man, and by other men—to be the equivalent of a woman's life; a setback to his ambition will be taken as a threat to his very existence. A woman's career, on the other hand, is just a job. Many of the senators couldn't understand why Anita Hill didn't simply give up her career if she didn't like the way she was treated. Clarence Thomas is a judge: what he does for a





"This song is dedicated to our parents, and is in the form of a plea for more adequate supervision."

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living is to review the cases of men and women, many of whom believe themselves to be as innocent as he claims to be. Yet when he was asked to bear for a moment a version of the same kind of scrutiny, he saw himself as a martyr—a lynching victim. His rage was thought to be impressive. Had Professor Hill shown the slightest sign of anger, of course, it would have been further proof of her "unstable" and "vindictive" nature.

As my sisters long ago explained, in the seemingly distant context of discussions of late-nineteenth-century psychiatry, any woman who is difficult will eventually be called mad. On Saturday afternoon, Senator Arlen Specter blandly accused Professor Hill of perjury. By Sunday night, he had refined this conjecture: it was not that Professor Hill was lying but that she was simply unable to distinguish truth from fantasy. His tone suggested that this change in accusation had been made for her benefit—that she ought to be grateful for the superior male wisdom that recognized her as helpless in the grip of her delusions rather than as a deliberate liar.

Men define reality, and women seek refuge within the interstices of those definitions, my sisters have told me; the feminist theorists have written similar things, grandly and abstractly. I now see what this means in terms of practical conduct. Judge Thomas offered nothing except a blanket denial and a raft of wild accusations. Nonetheless, his anger was apparently judged by many other men, and by some women, to be admirable, as a kind of expression of masculinity: so admirable that it enabled him to redefine the hearings in terms of *his* suffering, *his* struggle, *his* martyrdom, *his* career—*his* reality. He turned the discussion to the historical generalities of racial oppression—of which his accuser had certainly had at least as much experience as he had—and was allowed to escape the responsibility of meeting the particular accusations of sexual oppression. The committee had treated Professor Hill in "a very polite and professional way," Senator Specter said on Tuesday, and this time he went on to accuse her of both perjury *and* delusional lying. Since she had been treated "politely," her claims could be dismissed, instead of refuted, and she could once again be rendered negligible.

Talking to my wife and mother and sisters about the hearings, I heard in their voices not so much anger as resignation and familiarity. "This comes to you as a *surprise*?" they said, in so many words. Watching these women over a lifetime, I realize, I had often been a little surprised when they would burst into rage and indignation about what seemed to me "petty" injustices and slights at the hands of men. They had on tap a vein of anger that bewildered me, rising, as it did, from lives that were so obviously successful and happy. I owe them an apology. They had experienced things that I had not, and had tried to tell me truths that I had chosen not to hear.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STREET

"FOR that," his lawyer told Fawcett, "you need a notary public. In this state they're the ones who handle car-title changes." Fawcett hadn't lived in his home state for forty years, and only his mother's death had brought him back. He was taking possession of his meagre inheritance, cleaning out her sad, crammed apartment. He lived far to the west, and the climate and the vegetation and even the quality of light here in Pennsylvania seemed strange. The afternoon light was dying at the windows; the leafless trees in the courtyard below were sinking into a well of darkness, with a silvery November glitter, as if after an ice storm, gleaming on their upper twigs. He looked in the phone book under "Notary Publics," and one listed at 262 Chestnut Street, Hayesville, leaped to his eye. A woman, Georgene R. Mueller. She answered the phone and sounded excessively cheerful and helpful; but perhaps that was just the regional manner, which he had slowly lost. He suggested that, late as it was, their transaction must wait until tomorrow. But she told him, going that extra mile with him, the way people in Pennsylvania did, "No, I'm open here until eight. A lot of the people, you know, can't get to you except in the evenings. You'll need the car title, the insurance card, your own driver's license, and what we call the Short Certificate. It'll say 'Short Certificate—Letters Testamentary' across the top."

"Yes, I have those. My lawyer gave me plenty."

"Now let me tell you how to find my house. You come out the Ephrata Pike—"

"I know," Fawcett told her. "I used to live across the street, at two sixty-one."

"Did you, though? What did you say your name was?"

He told her, but it rang no bell. "It was a long time ago," he apologized. "Just after the war. I was a child. We moved when I was twelve."

"Is that a fact? Well, it's still a house to be proud of. The Brubakers sold it, you know." This name meant nothing to him. "A younger couple has bought it and sold off the back half of the lot."

"Really? It wasn't that big a lot in the first place." The vegetable garden had been down there, and his mother's rows of peonies, and the asbestos-shingled chicken house his grandfather had had built, and the little fenced-in yard where his grandmother used to behead chickens with a hatchet, on a stained old stump. Within the chicken house there was a liquid clucking, and a musty stench of chicken dung, and there were fascinating glass eggs scattered about in the straw to give the stupid hens the idea of laying.

"Well, I know." Georgene Mueller sighed. "But that's how they do things these days. They crowd the houses in. This is considered a desirable neighborhood."

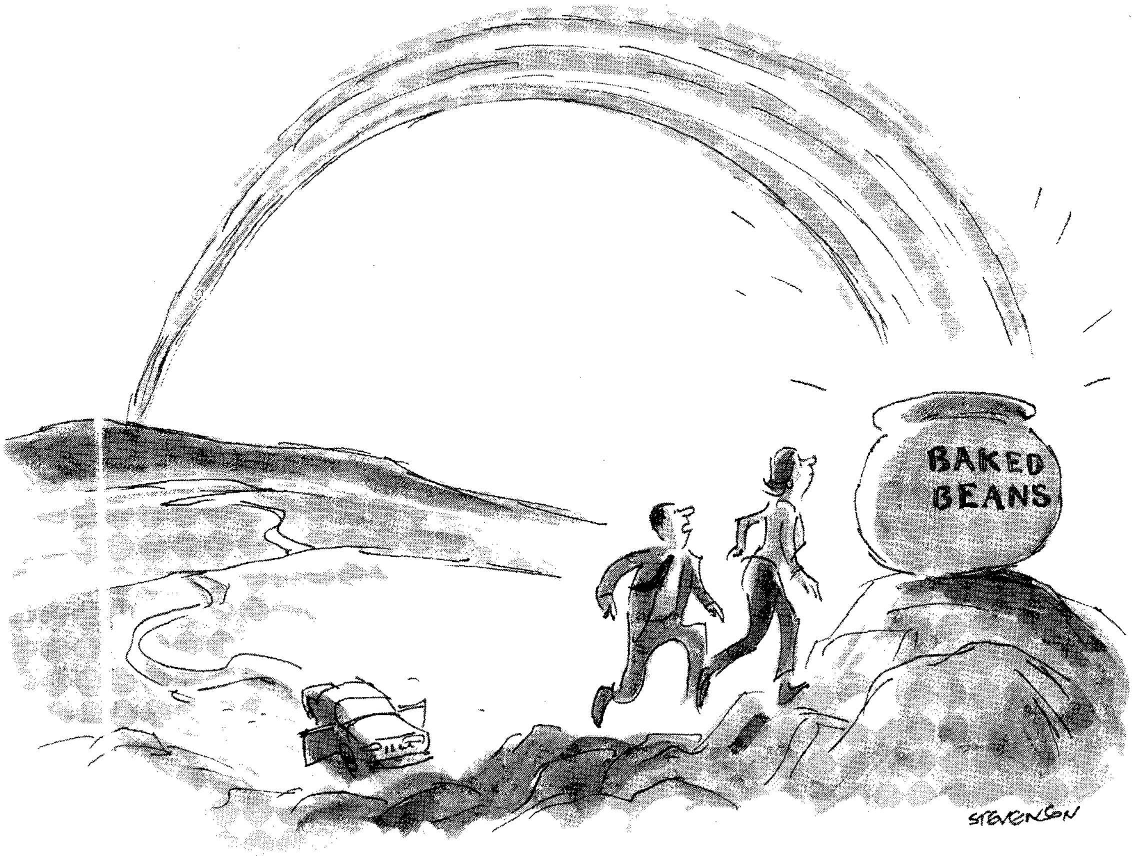
"It always was," Fawcett told her. "That's why my grandfather bought the place, back in the twenties. I'll be there around seven. I got to get a bite to eat; I've been lugging junk all day." There was no need to tell her about all this, but perhaps he was gaining back the garrulous local manner.

FAWCETT knew the way, but was slightly confused by the traffic lights, which had multiplied in Hayesville since he was last there. A mall spread itself where there had been fields. A new high school, flat and low, reminded him of an airport. Along the low side of Chestnut Street, the trees had been cut down and the curb pushed back. Without the trees, his old street had a bareness that made the houses—some frame, some brick—appear exposed and shabby. The cement retaining walls had developed bulges and cracks since he was a child—or else a child never noticed such things—and the long flights of steps, with iron-pipe railings, up to the porches of the semidetached houses on the high side of the street had a gaunt, cockeyed look that was not part of his memories. To a child's eyes these steps had looked grand. You climbed them, and found magical pleasures at the top—a squeaking porch glider from which to watch the traffic go by below, a plushy front parlor with its shade drawn and a tinted big goblet of hard candy on a polished end table, a back yard with a double garden swing in a kind of bower of hollyhocks and morning glories, and a cement walk going back, straight as an arrow, toward the alley where the ice plant was. Beyond the alley had been a large vacant lot where in the summer travelling amusement parks set up their tents and rides.

Fawcett had lived on the low side of the street, with his family's yard sloping down to the truck garden and the chicken house, and the elevated houses across the street had seemed to be more alive than his, more packed with blessings. At 260, next door to the similar house with a lighted "Public Notary" sign in the window of a glassed-in front porch, had lived Wilma Anna

THE UNKNOWN ACADEMIC INFIGHTER

Emmelfoss, a girl his age, who always went to school in fussy dresses of the sort that the other girls wore only to Sunday School. At Christmastime Wilma Anna's front parlor acquired a big long-needled evergreen; he remembered the stiflingly rich scent of pine-sap, and the musty attic aura of antique tree ornaments, and the department-store perfume that the crisply wrapped presents gave off. The furniture in Wilma Anna's house all matched, and wore doilies, and shelves of polished knickknacks were hung on the walls; the lampshades had tassels. When the Christmas tree was crowded in, the parlor seemed a cave of treasure you had to wriggle into, holding your breath.



"Quite frankly, I'm a bit disappointed."

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At that time, an old woman had lived next door. Fawcett had forgotten her name. She wore cotton housedresses that buttoned down the front—a figure of fun and dread, living alone. At Halloween, she turned off all her lights and wouldn't come to the door when children rang the bell in their costumes. Now the stone retaining wall at 262 leaned toward the sidewalk slightly, and had lost some pointing; the iron-pipe railing rattled loosely under Fawcett's hand. He rang a bell where a small rectangular light glowed; with his hand on the storm-door latch, he could feel the house tremble as its owner approached from the back, walking through the rooms.

Hayesville women beyond a certain age were of two types only: overweight or wiry. Georgene Mueller was one of the wiry ones, with a quick darting head of tight solid-black curls, and eyeglasses frames of several colors and substances. Her mouth seemed to be a mechanism that functioned whether or not she was paying attention to it. "I didn't hear the ring for a second, I was just finishing putting in the dishes and watching the first part of the news, it almost makes you feel sorry now for Mr. Gorbachev, he must wonder what's going to happen next, and Mr. Bush now can do no wrong, it seems."

"That could change," Fawcett said, taken aback by the wide perspectives she instantly opened up.

"Yes, the way the world is now, especially with these Arabs," she said, nevertheless moving past him toward her seat of business. Her desk and typewriter were set up in the sun porch, under several framed empowering certificates.

"I'm the man who called an hour ago—"

"About the car title," she finished for him. "I recognize your voice." An out-of-state voice, he supposed he had now. He handed her the papers he had assembled. "You had no trouble finding me, I suppose."

"No, but there are more traffic lights than I remember."

"And still it's a tangle down at the corner at five o'clock. And even on Saturdays and Sundays now. It's the new mall toward Quarrytown has done it."

"Is the quarry still there? We used to swim in it, and ice-skate winters, when it was cold enough. A lot of winters, though, it never did quite freeze." His own mouth seemed to be running a lot, at random. It excited him to be on this, the other, side of the street, looking through this woman's windows at his old house, with its steep-pitched roof and plump porch pillars. To him as a child the front of the house had been a face—the two bedroom windows a pair of eyes close together, and the porch roof a sort of mustache, and the door and windows gleaming teeth. The striped awning in summer became another sort of teeth. This was the view of his house the crabby old lady had had. She often must have seen him go in and out the front door. Old women living alone look out their windows. Fawcett's mother, it now occurred to him, must have often looked out of hers, into that courtyard.

"The hole in the ground is still there, but I believe they've fenced it off. Too dangerous. A boy drowned twenty or so years ago." And in Fawcett's childhood, too, it was said that a boy had drowned, twenty or so years ago. "Everything's here," the woman said, "except I need your registration card. This is the certificate the state gives you, but there's also a little card."

"Maybe it's in my mother's car. She didn't drive too much, toward the end."

Georgene Mueller did not offer sympathy. Death to her was a matter of paperwork. Yet her advice was kind. "You look in your mother's glove compartment," she said, "and I'll bet you'll find the little card I'm talking about."

"I don't know," he said. "She was pretty scatterbrained the last year or so."

"That's how they get. My mother did, too. They go back."

Fawcett remembered the local expression: "going back," for regressing, for turning senile.

It excited him to be outdoors in the cool misty night again, on the deeply familiar street. On these very sidewalk squares, Wilma Anna and he had laid out hopscotch courts with colored chalks, and played with a rubber heel that if thrown wrong would bounce and bobble into the gutter, where the water from the ice plant ran. He found the registration card immediately, in the blue Velcro-fastened folder the automobile manufacturer provided. The dead try to take care of us. His mother had been depressed toward the end but not senile. Precise instructions regarding her funeral had been folded in her upper left-hand desk drawer, with her bankbooks and tax forms. His heart swelled in his chest at the unaccustomed effort of climbing the cement steps again. He wondered if people who lived on this side of the street lived longer, from the exercise. The land was flat where he lived now, with snow-tipped mountains unreal in the distance.

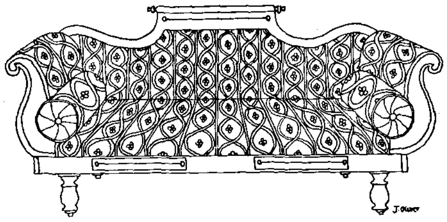
As the notary typed away at her long pale-green forms, he sat beside her desk, looking across the street, and told her, "We used to have a hedge, all around. In a kind of pattern, with raised pieces at intervals; we had this funny heavy long trimmer you cranked, to make the teeth go back and forth. It took two people to operate it, my mother and grandfather usually. And bushes, we had a lot of bushes to trim. The front yard looks pretty bald now."

"When they widened the street, they pushed back the sidewalks on that side."

"Yes, and no horse chestnuts. We used to collect them."

"Children do," she said.

Fawcett held his tongue, helpless to convey to her the peculiar wealth of a wagonful of horse chestnuts in their glossiness, their faint punky smell, their oval spots of pallor like the belly on a Teddy bear. "The place was a lot of work to keep up," he felt compelled to volunteer. "But that wasn't why we moved. My father lost his job in forty-five because a returning veteran took it back, and we had to move down to Wilmington, where there was work. My mother moved back to the area when my father died, to this apartment in town she always hated, though she never complained. I suppose she would have liked to live with me, but I had a wife." Fawcett had had three wives, all told. He hated to say no to women—that silent powerful appeal they give off, like the pinesap scent of Wilma Anna's Christmas tree.



"There's a lot of heartbreak," Georgene Mueller admitted, frowning into the desk light as she rubbed the green form with a typewriter eraser. "It's a handsome house. Even without the shutters and the awnings. They came down about ten years ago, my husband and I were here already."

"I used to wish I lived on this side of the street," Fawcett confessed. "It seemed, I don't know, more fun over here, even though the houses were smaller."

"This sun porch is a godsend," she said. "Without it, I'd have no place to set up shop. In the dead of winter, you'd be surprised how the sun warms it up, I have an electric heater but

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3 A.M. COMEDY

Sometimes it's funny, this after-hour when
whatever hasn't happened between us
hasn't happened again, and I pretend

to be another kind of woman, who spends
the night on the couch in a rage,
on strike for affection—

But how ridiculous.
I'm always in this bed,
if not having you, then forgiving you

exquisitely, consoling myself
with a lame joke: I'm a shrinking
being, tinier and tinier I grow,

there I go!
The last woman on earth
who even bothered about sex,

and now I'm nothing but a speck.
What a shame for all those lusty men;
their world without me is barren.

While you, my dear, get
larger: you're a hulking, man-
shaped continent, a cool green

giant (I can hardly reach your leafy
parts), or a statuesque
philosopher-king, whose sleep soars

above mathematics, his loftiest argument.

—Deborah Gottlieb Garrison

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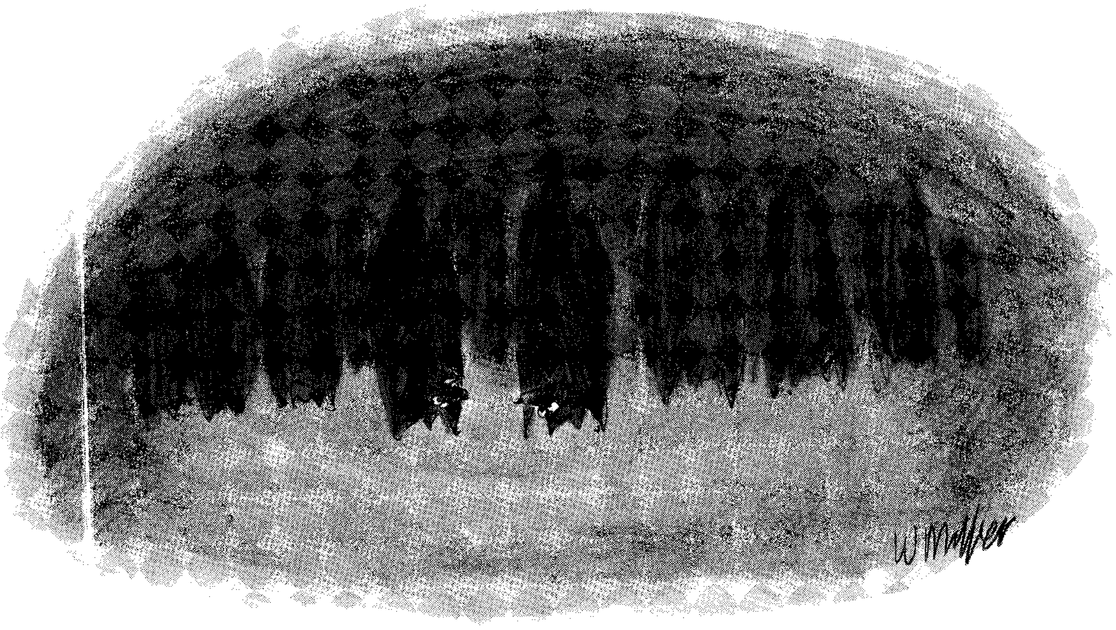
hardly ever have to turn it on." With a smart twirl of the platen she freed the paper from the typewriter. She sorted out the duplicates, with a grimace of effort pressed her notary seal into the original and the carbon copies, gave him back the cards and papers she didn't need. Yes, he remembered, this was how people did things here: seriously, thoroughly, carefully. Life had weight here. The total—her fee and the Commonwealth's—came to twenty-nine dollars. She clipped his checks to her papers and showed him the envelope in which she would send his application for title transfer to Harrisburg first thing in the morning. "Would you like to see the house?" she said at the conclusion of her instructions.



"We're starting to get media coverage. Pass it on."

Fawcett had been gazing so steadily at his old house that it took him a second to realize that she meant her own. "Sure," he said. She saw him as an orphan, in need of a treat. Which he supposed, he was. The swish of traffic was slackening on Chestnut Street, and there were no lights on at the front of his old house, just an unsteady upstairs phosphorescence indicating the presence of a television set, or an aquarium with a flickering bulb.

In that house, there had been a curious area downstairs, under the windows that looked out onto the side porch, where between the baseboard and the edge of the carpet an exposed stretch of floor had made a kind of bowling alley; he would line up rubber toys and towers of blocks there and bowl at them with a ball he owned, not a regulation softball but a much besmirched white-rubber imitation, with purely sculptural seams and stitches. He had spent hours by himself at this strange sport, in this marginal area where grownups rarely set foot, and supposed that if his childhood had left a ghost its haunt would be here. Here, and in Wilma Anna's two-seat white wooden swing, dappled by sun coming through morning glories, she in her starchy little fussy dress swinging forward as he swung back.

GEORGENE MUELLER's living room, as wide as her house minus the width of a set of unused stairs, contained the usual goblet of candy on an end table next to a sullen brown-plush sofa. Noticing the direction of his eyes, she said, "Have a piece. That's what it's there for."

He removed the fragile glass lid, with its round red-tinted knob. The candy was not hard, in twists of cellophane, but leftover Halloween candy: three-tone corn kernels, grinning pumpkins, and conical witches' hats, chewy but not too gummy for his bridgework. For twenty-nine dollars, he figured he could sneak a handful while his hostess moved into the next room. "When Jake left," she was saying, as if Fawcett knew the story, "I was so mad I took the little savings account we had and blew it on the dining room, the people before us had had it such a dull dark room and Jake always said it was good enough, we ate in the kitchen anyway."

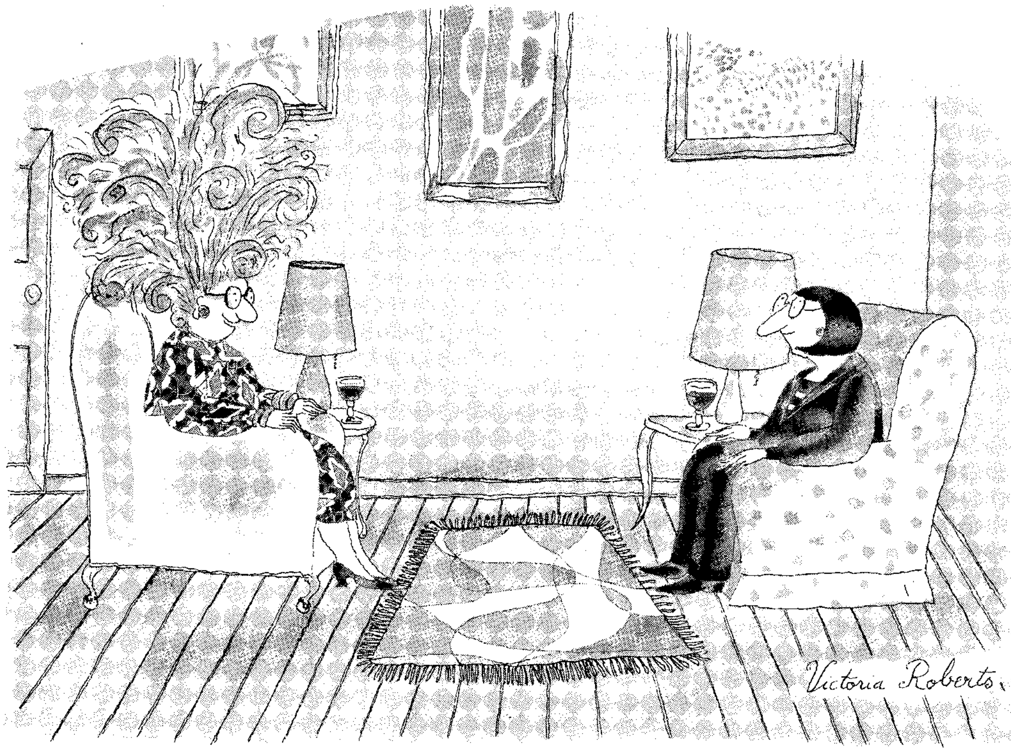
The room was not dull now. Spanishness was the theme, from a wrought-iron chandelier with violet candles to wall mirrors with wide baroque frames of encrusted fake silver. Artificial beams had been placed along the ceiling, descending to jutting oaken brackets as if in a California mission, above panels of three-dimensional imitation stonework; behind the mirrors a silvery wallpaper was patterned in blown-up Victorian steel engravings, like a Max Ernst collage repeated over and over. A cave of treasure. That was how the houses on this side of the street had always seemed to him. "Lovely," Fawcett said, through the chewy Halloween candy. "Really striking."

She pondered his verdict and the walls of the room, where a few prints of staring deer, shadow-boxed in velvet, completed the effect. "It was a fancy of mine. That's one thing about being alone, you can do what you want."

Yes, Fawcett had already noticed how, with the distant pressure of his mother's existence lifted, his personality had begun to expand on that side, distorting into a shape that half frightened him. His new talkativeness, for instance—a reaching out, where he had always taken pride in being self-reliant, going west like a tight-lipped pioneer.

"How long have you lived here, altogether?" he asked Georgene Mueller. Her hair was curly and her movements brisk, even twitchy, with reserves of energy. Women who looked old to him were, he still had difficulty realizing, his age or even younger.

"Thirteen years, it'll be. For the last seven I've supported myself. It's hard, but you make do. Your mother made do, too, I don't doubt. My upstairs here



"As soon as the leaves turn, my hair goes crazy."

I have to rent, I couldn't get by without it. The neighborhood's seeing some changes, the lots being subdivided like they are, and the houses going into apartments. This is my bedroom, do you mind passing through? I thought you'd like to see the back yard."

"I would, yes. I used to play in the back yard next door."

"She keeps it up real nice. Flowers back to the alley like her parents always had, and she just had that garden swing painted again. She cares for it like it's a real antique."

"Who does?"

"Why, Wilma Anna!"

"You mean she's still there?"

"Oh, sure. All alone. She *never* married. Though lately she has a boyfriend comes calling, I never noticed one before. She goes to movies now, and shows in town. I don't think she's there now even, or you could go say hello."

"Wilma Anna Emmelfoss. I can't believe she's still here. That was more than forty years ago."

"Her mother went quick, but her dad—oh, he lingered something dreadful."

"You wouldn't believe what a pretty little girl she was, always in these dresses that seemed a little too fancy to everybody else."

"She still dresses nice. For her work, you know. She sells real estate. There, you can see her swing through the kitchen window."

Leaning over an aluminum sink, Fawcett could see a patch of white in the darkness, and a blurred white framework around it: the arbor that had sheltered them as children, swinging back and forth, back and forth, a sulky quizzical look on Wilma Anna's careful face, with its wide forehead and pointed chin, spotted by shadows and sun quicker than the eye could sort out. "I see it," he said politely.

"Here's my pride and joy," his hostess said. "My little piece of heaven." She led him out the back door, and they stared up the rise of her narrow back yard, with a center walk of cement arrowing back to the alley. Fawcett's heart seemed to swell again, pumping too hard. These secret yards, straight and narrow, had been the essence of the happiness on this side of the street; lush flower beds along the walk, a patch of lawn with some lawn furniture, a shed containing hoses and rakes, an apple tree or two to represent an orchard, low fences of picket or playground wire, each quarter acre in strict parallel with its neighbors', and the far end holding a garage and opening onto the freedom of the alley. He inhaled Hayesville happiness; he saw his entire life, past and to come, as an errant encircling of this forgotten center. His childhood back yard, with the bloody stump, the frightened sad stupid chickens, the vegetable rows that always needed weeding, had seemed comparatively disorderly. His family had not quite had the Hayesville secret. It was right that they had been forced to move.

He inhaled the moist darkness again and listened dimly to Georgene Mueller's detailing of the flowers she cultivated, the quince tree whose fruit she made jelly of, the storage shed and stone bench she had ordered from a supply house—her life stubbornly exerting its pressure back against that of the world. Returning to her gaudy kitchen, with plaid Formica on all the counters, Fawcett looked once more at Wilma Anna's white embowering swing, and tried to imagine her life here, all those more than forty years: it was unimaginable, like the life of a tree. For his mother's solitude Fawcett felt largely responsible, and amid the undercurrents of this encounter, he was acquiring responsibility for this woman's solitude, as well—at least, a touch of guilt at the tug of her tight, dyed curls, her undischarged energy. But in regard to Wilma Anna's life he felt nothing but wonder.

On the way out, he was going to avoid the tempting candy, but Georgene Mueller said, "Take some. It'll just go stale otherwise. The children don't come around like they used to. A lot of the parents don't let them out, what with the maniacs you read about who put poison in the treats." She had suddenly become impatient, and tired. They moved in silence together through the darkened sun porch; the slight fever of their intimacy, which had peaked in the back yard, had subsided. Fawcett felt dismissed. Stepping into the glittery November chill, he was dazzled to see the house on the other side of the street ablaze; the porch light and front-room lamps were lit up as if to welcome someone.

—John Updike

COME OVER

Edna had slept in curlers for her granddaughter Kitty’s first birthday. Linda, her daughter-in-law—her ex-daughter-in-law, actually—was holding a party that afternoon. The curlers had fallen out in the night, but Edna still felt prickly, with bits of pain in her scalp. Thomas called down from his office, “Is that you?”

“I’ll be up with the charts in a minute,” she answered. The office was in a faded gray Colonial facing the park; Thomas lived in the back. If he called her again or came out to the landing, she would duck behind the stairs. She hated getting ready for the day. Thomas Mason’s medical practice, which she had run for twenty-eight years, was like a boat that set off every morning in terrible condition. At the end of each crossing, it had strewn more parts of itself around, and had a few more leaks she would never get around to repairing.

The appointments book lay open on Edna’s desk. She looked it over. It was their half day of office visits. They were solidly booked, starting with Faith O’Malley, who had colitis, Jack “Bozo” Kuzick, who was one of the cancer patients, and Jimmy Poirier, ten months old, whose hips were put in traction nightly. Thomas had to work at the free town clinic from two to five. It was held in the outpatient ward of the hospital, so he would probably cover emergencies. At seven, there was a meeting of his doctors’ group, the Cases Club, all men, at the usual restaurant downtown. Edna hoped he’d skip it. All they ever did was overeat, then push back their chairs after dinner and start farting and complaining. The new furnace he had ordered was coming tomorrow, and they would have to clear room in the basement tonight to get it in. Meanwhile she had a high stack of Medicaid forms to get through, and she was three days behind in transcribing his notes to patients’ folders. How could she get away for the baby’s party?

She picked up the phone and buzzed Thomas. “I have to go out for a while,” she said.

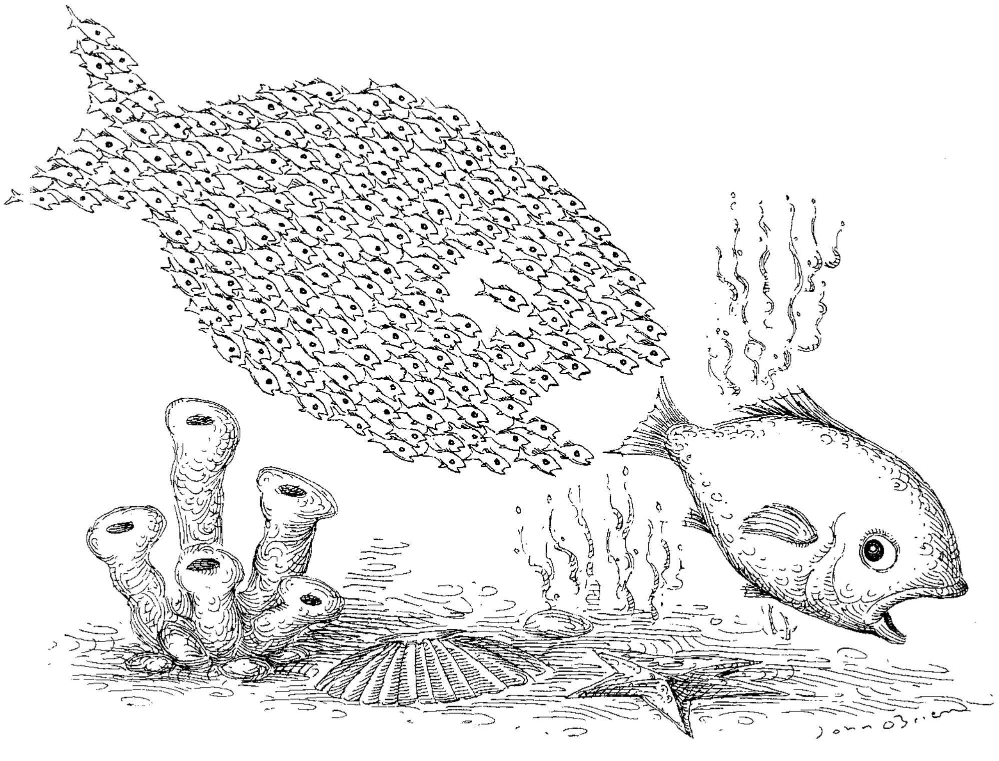
“What, Edna, now?”

“I’ll be back in twenty minutes.” She hadn’t taken off her coat and scarf. She put her purse on her arm and left the office quickly, before he could stride to the hall, lean over the bannister, and try to find out where she was going. Whatever she said wouldn’t matter. He’d think she had slipped again, that she was going out to buy something to drink—as if anywhere had opened yet, as if she’d wander through town in the fog and chilly air, knocking on back doors like during Prohibition. Thomas always spoke of it the same way: Edna’s “slipping,” as if she were one of the patients.

Madame LeMoyne’s dancing studio was on the third floor of the Woolworth building. The store had been closed for eight years. There were tarps all over the floor, and sawhorses among the rows of empty counters, but nothing ever went on by way of renovations.

One end of the studio was Arlette LeMoyne’s living quarters, separated off by a flowered bedspread on a clothesline. It was pulled back. The cot was covered with glittery costumes, and heaps of Arlette’s clothes. The drawers of a file cabinet, which she used as a bureau, had been stuffed with more clothes, and wouldn’t shut. A small refrigerator, a hot plate, an electric kettle, a television set, a hair dryer, and a lamp were plugged into extension cords off a single outlet. Edna had carefully told Tiff, the older of her two grandchildren, what to do the day a fire broke out: keep her head and hurry calmly down the stairs, then run through the park to Dr. Mason’s.

The folding chairs at the other end of the studio were for the mothers, but today no one had stayed to watch. Sometimes when Tiff noticed Edna in the doorway she came skittering over and happily took hold of Edna’s hand and pulled her toward the chairs. Every time Edna sat watching the class she was afraid Linda would get there early to pick up Tiff. One of these days it was bound to happen. Edna had rehearsed bumping into her. She’d gone over and over the things they’d exchange by their looks, in the air above her grandchildren’s heads. Even though it was Edna who paid for the lessons, she was sure she’d get up and leave if Linda wanted her to. Edna’s son, Robbie, had been married to Linda for six years. It had astonished Edna when he left her. And Robbie wouldn’t live in town anymore, like the other ex-husbands his age—in a bachelor pad, taking work around town when he could get it. He moved out of state; he would come for his children on the holidays. He had found a job in Miami with a building contractor, and now he



was supervising, at new sites, the putting in of water hookups and sewers, and webs in the ground of cable and wire. How had this happened?

Arlette was standing near the record-player. She taught tap and ballet, but for this class, the early-bird five-year-olds, she didn't expect much, just skipping. She wore a dark chiffon dress—the kind called a tea-length. She was bare-legged, and had cloth Chinese shoes on. Everything about her was musty and soft and a little flabby. Her hair, Edna noticed, had been tinted again. This time it was whitish-gold. She wore it pulled back in a bun. With her soft face and her air of sad composure she reminded Edna of Peggy Lee.

"Hello, Arlette," Edna called. There weren't any mirrors like in a proper dancing studio. When Woolworth closed, Arlette brought up the mirrors from the shoe department, which she had found crammed in bins below the counters. She had set them at angles along the dance-floor perimeter. She said she had done it on purpose so her girls would learn to look at their feet, not at their faces and hair. Here and there, shafts of dusty yellow sunlight glanced off them.

"Cue, girls," said Arlette in a weary voice. She saw Edna and waved. Then she spoke to a girl near the front of the line. The girl was plump and sturdy, like Tiff, and wore the same type of black leotard. She hadn't put her tap shoes on yet, and swung them by the ribbons as she slid across the dance floor to Edna. "Mrs. Fleury!" she cried. "Tiffy had to stay home and help with the baby's birthday! She'll be back another day!"

Arlette placed the needle on the record and the music started. The old building seemed to move back and forth in the wind, with a sound of rattling windows, as if the panes were part of the song. "I'll see you next week, Arlette!" Edna called.

THOMAS was upstairs with an old man who had fallen in his shower and was scalded. In the waiting room were Monica Feld and her small son, Roger; Suzanne Barker, who sat at the edge of her chair rubbing and picking at her hands; Bob Cheney and his wife, Doris, who had come for the results of Bob's biopsy; and a man named Teddy Hamilton, from the plastics factory. He wasn't a scheduled patient. He had some kind of head wound. He held a balled-up handkerchief to the back of his head, but when Edna asked to see it, he said no.

After nearly five minutes of looking, Edna found Suzanne Barker's chart. It had taken so long because she had filed it under "P," for Suzanne Psoriasis. "Mr. Hamilton!" she said. It had come to her that he might need stitches. The last time they had someone from plastics, it was a foreman who had been given a shot of morphine by the factory nurse. He had driven himself to Ivey Street and had arrived hale and hearty, and then fell back unconscious when Thomas said, "Your ribs are all broken. Every one."

"No hospital," said Teddy Hamilton.

"The doctor might be another twenty minutes," said Edna. "You might need that sewn up."

"I'll wait. Can I go back to my seat now?"

"Yes, go ahead," said Edna. "Monica Feld!"

A blond, skinny woman of thirty came into the hall.

"He won't eat, Edna," she said.

"You mashing up his vitamins?"

"Every day. I swear to God."

"Send him in and I'll check his weight."

When Roger came in, Edna said, "I fibbed to your mom. What did you have for supper last night?"

He was about eight. He looked smaller than the last time Edna had seen him. He had a mouth of bad teeth; he had thin brown streaks along his gum lines. "Lucky Charms, but I threw up."

"What about breakfast?"

"Lucky Charms without the milk."

"Can you do something for me, and keep it secret?"

The boy brightened. "I'm a Ninja," he said.

"Did you notice the man in there, the very tall one who never ate vegetables, and hurt the back of his head? I want you to watch him. If he seems to be dizzy, like he's falling off his chair, I want you to come and get me right away."

"Is he going to die?"

"We don't know yet," said Edna. She looked up. Thomas was on his way from the bathroom to an exam room. He was gloved. Edna reached for Bob Cheney's report in its brown lab envelope and held it up. She pointed to herself and mouthed, "Mine?" Thomas nodded. Edna rolled her hand loosely in a gesture of cranking. It was their sign that there was a bleeder in the waiting room, but she left it to Thomas to come and figure out which one. "Bob Cheney!" she said. His wife came with him to the hall.

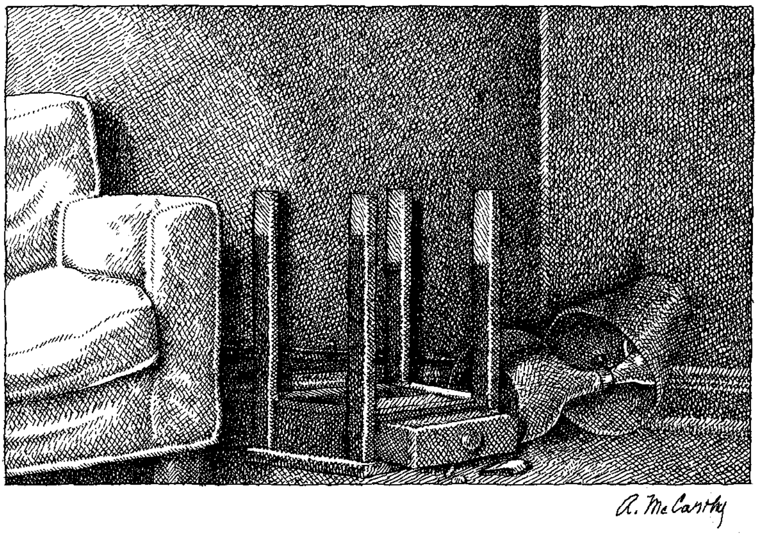
Edna brought them to the consultation room. She told them to take the two good armchairs, and sat opposite them on the straight-backed wooden one, with Bob's folder in her lap. Bob's tumor rose up from the corner of his mouth to the top of his cheekbone. It was pink, as if sunburned, and more or less circular. Edna and the Cheneys weren't friends, but their sons had gone to school together. They knew each other the way everyone in the town knew who everyone else was. "How are things with you," said Edna.

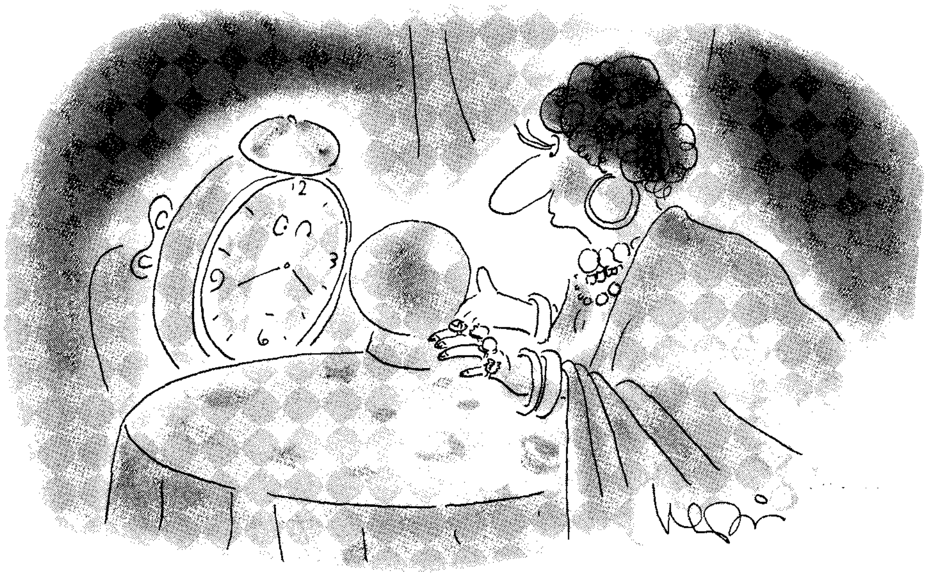
"Can't complain," said Bob Cheney.

"Must be different with you being retired."

"He deserved it," Doris said quickly, and Edna nodded, although

THE DEAD END TABLE





"You will fall backward. But eventually you will spring ahead."

• •

she wasn't sure what Doris meant. Until a few months ago Bob had worked for the gas company as a meter reader. "Early retirement" was what they called it, but it was obvious they'd let him go, because how could they keep sending him to people's houses? The tumor looked as if a half-grown octopus had attached itself to his cheek, with its tentacles tucked up neatly below it.

Edna said, "This business with the pills Thomas has you on—did he tell you that you can't take a drink?"

"Oh, he would never," said Doris.

Bob said, "I hear he bought a new furnace."

"He did. I don't know where we'll put it. We've got twenty tons of medical equipment he's been storing in the basement. I said to him, 'So what do you expect, Tom? You think things can disappear just like that when you want them to?' "

"He works you too hard, Edna. I always thought so," said Doris.

"O.K.," Bob said. "Let's have it."

Edna folded her hands on top of the folder and smiled. "Thomas says to call if the blackouts come back. But otherwise, he says to tell you it's negative. You're as clean as a whistle."

"Oh!" they both said. Bob turned to Edna. "If there's anything you need, anytime, you let me know, O.K.?"

"Thanks," said Edna.

They got up. They were walking down the hall when Edna thought of something. She had seen the Cheneys' house only a few times, years ago, when their boys were small. Gone there to fetch Robbie, she had never been past the kitchen, but she remembered clearly how polite Bob was, and how Doris was fussy. The place had smelled like Formula 409. There weren't any houseplants or cereal boxes on the counters. On the burners of the stove were aluminum lids with floral designs, as if Doris wanted to hide the fact of cooking. The toaster had a quilted bunting with a peaked top, and all the rest of the small appliances had covers, too. Robbie used to say it was fun to play at the Cheneys' if all you wanted to do was watch television. It was a house of antisepsis.

"I'll get the car," said Doris.

Bob was near the door with Edna. "See you in a minute, dear," he said to his wife, and Edna looked at him. Had he grown his tumor on purpose?

"You on the up-and-up with me, Edna?"

"I am, Bob," she said. He took from his pocket a wide-brimmed, floppy cotton hat. He put it on. He pulled it down so it almost covered the tumor, but this made Edna want to see it more closely. She wanted to run to the appointments book to pencil him in, in a bold square block for the rest of the day. She couldn't wait to see him again. She reached up and took hold of the hat. When she pushed it back, he blushed deeply, and his eyelids fluttered, like a man who is about to be kissed. The color of the tumor stayed the same. "I'll send you a card in the mail for your next appointment," said Edna, louder than she meant to.

THE office was still. It was after four. She should have left for Kitty's party, but she kept finding things to do around her desk. The gifts for the children—plastic blocks and a sundress for the birthday girl, and a book for Tiff—were in a bag by the door. Edna stood in the hall, wanting a drink, and was frightened.

She picked up the phone. She thought of calling Thomas at the clinic. He would come right away to help her, but he would bear her, she knew, another grudge. She dialled the number of the hospital and asked for the lab.

It was Margaret Reilly, Edna's A.A. sponsor, thank God, who answered. "Lab," said her voice.

"It's me," said Edna.

"Where are you?"

"Work."

"I thought you had to get yourself to Linda's."

"I'm trying."

"I have to ask you," said Margaret. "You have anything there to drink?" Margaret's voice was calm. It was the tone she used on patients when she told them to make fists. It was said at the lab that she never lost a drop of blood someone needed.

"No," Edna said. "Not unless Thomas has something here I don't know about."

"Such as something you'd go looking for?"

"I'm calling you."

"Walk out the door and I'll meet you," said Margaret.

There was a pause. Edna looked out at the trees of the park, where fog filled the branches like moths' nests. Beyond were the buildings of the square. She thought of Robbie. She tried to imagine him in a hard hat, standing near a bulldozer, giving orders. But instead she saw him crumpled on a sidewalk, with a pink-and-orange sunset in the background, like a scene from "Miami Vice," dead of a gunshot wound, dead of falling off a building, dead of a stabbing, dead of everything, at the age of thirty-three.

"Don't hang up on me," said Margaret. "Walk downtown and meet me at Coker's. I have to buy some shoes. I have to go to a wedding."

"All right," said Edna. Then she said, "We set a bad example for Robbie. Me and Gene did."

"Divorce is not genetic," said Margaret.

AT the shoe store, the two women embraced by a bin with a sign that said "Designers Overstock, Every Pair Nineteen Dollars." Edna let go first. Margaret held her a moment longer. "I hate it when you smell me," said Edna.

Nina Coker was working the store alone. She stood at the counter tagging shoes. She wasn't one of their patients. Edna asked how she was, and Nina shrugged and said, "I had mono all winter. Don't ask. If you find anything that looks a little scruffy I'll knock off up to forty per cent. But don't spread it around."

Margaret asked Edna, "You like these?" She held up a pair of high-heeled shoes in the brightest shade of turquoise Edna ever saw. Edna took them away from her. She hadn't meant to do this so harshly, but when she dropped the shoes into the bin she swung out too far and hit Margaret on the arm and said, nearly spitting the words, "You'd just fall and make a fool of yourself, Margaret."

On the way to Linda's, Margaret didn't say anything. They didn't have far to go. The house that Robbie had run away from was a few blocks off Main Street, in a development of single-family houses all alike. Why Florida, a place for the old, where you went to retire and die? Was he very tan? Were there photos of his daughters on a bureau near his bed?

The house was still new. Linda had been pregnant with Kitty when they bought it. The street wasn't paved. Driving down it, Margaret was brooding and frowning. She deliberately made the car bounce too hard along the ruts.

"I'm sorry I said you'd fall if you wore those heels."

"Nina heard you," said Margaret. "Do you know whose wedding I have to go to? Brian Coker's. Nina's *brother*. And her other brother, Dave, who I hardly even know, is my *date*."

They pulled into the driveway. Margaret said, because Edna was looking down at the floor, "Look, Edna. No one's here. How late are you?"

"Not even half an hour." It was true. There were no other cars in the driveway. No one in Linda's family was sitting on the porch smoking cigarettes. The garage doors were closed. Linda's car was inside; Edna could see the antenna. The shades of the house were all down, but in an upstairs window there was a blue flicker of TV light.

"Did you get the time wrong?" Margaret asked.

"She wrote on the invitation four-thirty."

"Maybe she filled it in wrong."

"She wrote it on the back, too, Margaret. Looking forward to seeing you at four-thirty. Take me out of here."

"Wait. She's not doing anything that you wouldn't do yourself."

"I never took things out on Gene's mother."

"I'm leaving the presents," Margaret said. She took the bag from the back seat and carried it to the porch. She opened the storm door and

LOVE'S OLD SWEET SONG

Because if all of life is just a blip or some kind of exclamation
mark at the bottom of last week's weather (an almost snow-filled
field from which some weeds extrude; should we persist in
trying to find a home for these?), it means, doesn't it, that we're
allowed to backtrack to the slough we were backsliding into
anyway, and really learn about ourselves from it this time? I mean a
quagmire's a tidy place for pausing between highballs; there is
so much more to everything but this is a not inconsiderable prison
yard for getting that all-important exercise.
Meantime, one comes
bearing an envelope that is fresh and blue; one salivates; even
if it's not a stay of execution but an order for the immediate putting into
effect of same there's something to learn. It's not like two cats
ignoring each other in a basement areaway. By that I mean it was
going to lead up to something and then did, quite quickly. Better
than scanning hirsute sands for plumes announcing the arrival
of reinforcements; in those cases one invariably skips forward to a
time in the near future when everybody is happy again and an engagement
ring slips onto a ring finger of its own accord. But back,

I say, the heck with endings. I don't think I want to wear those socks.
On any other day of the week my attitude would elicit a few stares;
my value judgments are like what they used to call an "overdressed"
woman, and it has come about that my shadow is invisible to me, but
I don't know this yet. The conventional wisdom is that we
desire what's unattainable (reclining clouds, distant factory chimneys)
for precisely that reason. No allowance is made for the goodness
that might be lurking therein, like love in a tongue-tied child
whose cheek one pinches as one passes along to bigger and better
disappointments. We never know what we could walk back to except
when we do go back, and then it's as if not knowing and knowing
were the same thing.
I long for more weather around us,
but it's just not going to happen till we're in the middle
of its happening and know the results without being able to see them.
The time for passing is past and none but an idiot would think otherwise.
Yet I see I shall be needing some appraisals, tall and lucky
totems foundered in taller grass.

—JOHN ASHBERY

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propped the bag of presents against it.

“Drop me off at the park,” said Edna. “I feel like walking.”

SHE was halfway down her ex-husband’s street when she realized she was on her way to see him. Gene’s second wife’s name was Diane. The smell of cooking rushed out when he opened the door. He closed it quickly behind him. A chicken was roasting in the oven. “Hi, Edna,” he said, and sighed. “You want to come in?”

“I just came to tell you it’s the baby’s birthday.”

“You could have called.”

“Her name’s Kitty. She’s your second granddaughter.”

“I remembered. I sent her a savings bond.”

“How much?”

“Fifty.”

Well, he could afford it. She didn’t begrudge him how good he looked since he had turned himself over to Diane’s care. Gene worked nights on the maintenance crew at the cereal mill. Three or four mornings a week he went out to the health club at the Holiday Inn on the highway and lifted weights and rode a stationary bicycle. Overhead in the equipment room, he had told her, were banks of TV screens, and they were always playing a movie. Diane didn’t want him getting elderly. How old was she? Forty, forty-two. Gene was sixty.

“Linda put the wrong time on my party invitation. When I got there it was over. She still hates us.”

Gene looked away. Edna knew he was going to ask her if Robbie had called yet this week, and he didn’t want her to see his expression if the answer was no. Sitting in his house in his work clothes, in a chintz chair of Diane’s, waiting for his supper, perhaps he missed his son. Perhaps he was worried and baffled, the same as Edna was.

“He call you?”

Edna shook her head.

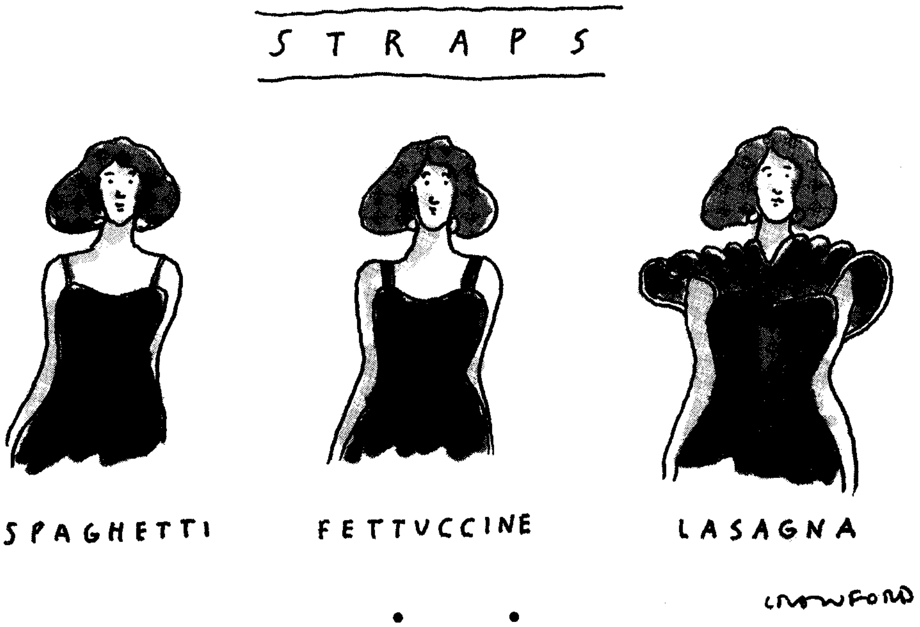
“I suppose you want to ask me for a ride somewhere,” Gene said.

“I have my own license,” said Edna.

“I thought they took it for ninety days.”

“It’s up.”

He said, “What do you want me to do? You want me to get on a plane and go down there and break his furniture? You want me to haul him back up here?”



“Come over tonight on your break,” said Edna.

For a moment, she thought he was going to laugh at her. He glanced over his shoulder toward the front windows, as if Diane stood hidden in the curtains like a giant ear. He didn’t laugh. He said, “Are you asking me what I think you’re asking me?” Edna nodded. He looked at her for a moment, then said, “This one time, or what?”

“I don’t know,” said Edna.

“O.K.,” he said quietly. He didn’t say anything else; he didn’t say, “If Diane finds out about this she’ll kill me.” But when Edna turned and walked down the steps, he called out, “Thanks for letting me know about the baby!”

THOMAS was in the basement. It was six-thirty, and he’d been down there for nearly an hour. Edna heard him walking around but not actually doing anything. She went over to the floor grate on the side of the hall and looked down at the white cellar light.

“If you’re hospitalizing Roger Feld, we need a reason to give Welfare. And I’m calling the furnace people to make them wait till next week.”

After about half a minute, he answered, “Are you talking to me?” That’s when Edna heard the thud at the door, the sound of something flung against it.

Edna made it to the porch in time to see Linda drive away. It looked as though she was alone in the car. At Edna’s feet lay the bag of presents. They had been opened. The wrapping paper, wadded up, was in there, too, with the loose blocks, the dress, and Tiff’s book. Edna brought the bag inside. She went to the phone and called Linda’s. The voice at the other end was unfamiliar; it wasn’t their regular sitter. “I’d like to speak to Tiffany Fleury,” Edna said.

“Who’s this?”

“This is her ballet teacher.”

“Hold on.”

When Tiff came on, Edna said, “It’s me.”

“Oh!” said Tiff. “Thank you for the book about the baby gorillas.”

“Did you look at it?”

“Yes, Gran.”

“What did it say?”

“It said, ‘Once upon a time there was a little gorilla who climbed a banana tree.’ ”

“What was on the second page?”

“I forget,” said Tiff.

“Did you remember I told you I’d come to Kitty’s party, but then I didn’t?”

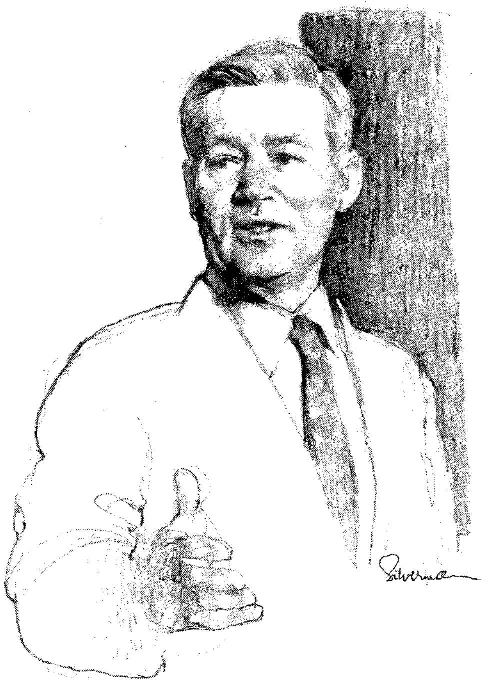
“Yes. But it’s because it was hers. And the only one you’d come to is if it’s mine. Gran? I have to go now. My babysitter wants to use the phone.”

Tiff’s voice entered her slowly, and Edna carefully measured the way it reached her, so that it took a few moments, after Tiff had hung up, to hear it all. She leaned back in her chair to receive it completely, like the sound of a bell in a buoy, and its echoes. For now she pushed the bag of presents under her desk—she’d figure out what to do with them later. Then she shouted down to Thomas that she was leaving, hoping it sounded like she was never coming back. —ELLEN COONEY

PROFILES

DANCING WITH THE GIRL THAT BRUNG HIM

William Michael Bulger has been President of the Massachusetts State Senate for thirteen years, the longest tenure in the history of the Commonwealth. In that time, he has ruled the Senate with a firm—some would say iron—hand. When, in 1990, the voters broke all recent precedents by electing a Republican governor—Bulger, like most Massachusetts officeholders, is a Democrat—it was commonly assumed that the Senate President's grip must loosen somewhat. It did not loosen enough, however, to diminish the guest list for Bulger's annual St. Patrick's Day breakfast in South Boston.



Since the mid-seventies, Bulger (the name is pronounced with a soft "g") has been holding his breakfasts at the Bayside Club, an aged tavern on the south slope of Dorchester Heights, overlooking Dorchester Bay. At eight-thirty, an hour and a half before the breakfast was to begin, a small crowd, liberally sprinkled with green carnations, had already gathered outside, around the front steps. One man, evidently an eccentric, wore a blue necktie. The V.I.P. route to the Bayside Club that morning, though, was not through the front door but down the hill, across the back parking lot, and up a spindly, quaking metal fire escape to the second-floor dining room. The reward for taking this route was the assurance of an actual seat at breakfast, although the chairs would not arrive for another hour or so. The annual seating drill, dictated by the cramped quarters and the size of the crowd, is for guests to slip down the aisles between long tables, like pinballs in a slot, until they can't move any farther and then to remain standing; when every available spot is filled, judges, state senators, and aides of Bulger's pass folding chairs through the fire-escape door to the nearest guests, who pass them on, hand over hand; each guest is responsible for unfolding his own chair and sliding himself into it. Latecomers share standing room with reporters and TV camera crews on risers at the sides and back of the hall; the crowd on the risers at this breakfast was four deep, six deep in the corners. If there had been a fire, we might all have roasted like chestnuts. The man on my right, though, thought that the fire escape was sturdier this year. "They put a brick or something under it," he said.

Actually, the type of public event which Bulger's breakfast most resembles is the roast, the metaphorical kind. Bulger roasts his guests, and his guests roast back. Typically, Bulger makes a presentation, often of a blown-up fake front page of the Boston *Globe*, since that allows him to make a double thrust—at his guest, and at the *Globe*, which is his nemesis in life. Bulger first came to my attention in 1984, when I learned that he had presented Elliott Richardson, then running for the Republican nomination for the United States Senate, with a mock *Globe* headlined "VOTE ELLIOTT: HE'S BETTER THAN YOU." Trophies of other past breakfasts hung on the walls; the pool of victims was bipartisan. "VOTE THE ROYAL FAMILY. WE NEED THEM ALL," another pseudo *Globe* exhorted, displaying photographs of Joseph Kennedy, Jr., and Prince Charles. Behind the head table, where the crush was marginally lighter, there was a party of musicians, keeping up a sewing-machine pulse of Irish music. I counted three accordionists, a guitar player, and a fiddler, but there may have been more; the sightlines were not excellent. At ten o'clock, when everyone was as comfortable as he or she was going to get, Bulger appeared, striding along the edge of a riser. He is a short, sandy-haired, blue-eyed man, who favors the haberdashery of bankers and lawyers, but in honor of the day he had admitted a green tie to his wardrobe and he carried a black shillelagh. Every button of his outfit was fastened smartly in place, and so was every hair of his head. When he reached the lectern, at the center of the head table, he took up a cordless mike and sang, in a gimlet-tenor voice, "The Wild Colonial Boy."

"There'll be laughter today," he said when the song ended. "Isn't this the happiest of times? We have plenty to cheer us. That darn war is behind us, thank God for that." (Desert Storm had ended three weeks earlier; there was applause.) "The Birmingham Six"—six alleged sympathizers with the Irish Republican Army who were held in British jails for sixteen years—"have been freed." (Bigger applause.) "Now we'll call upon Monsignor John MacNamara, and no one need stand." A priest at one end of the head table acknowledged that it would be a pleasure to give the blessing, and added, "But it is you who should pray for me. After all, I'm the pastor of Bill Bulger. And now a word from our sponsor."

"I wonder," Bulger interjected, "if He'll chip in and help us pay for it."

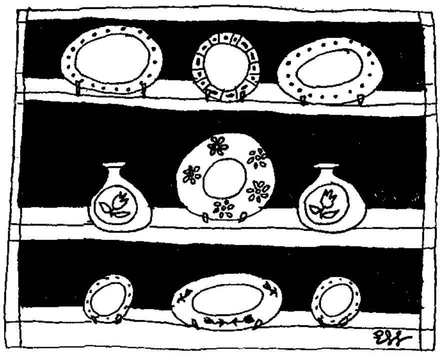
When Bulger was in college, almost four decades ago, he picked up extra money as a master of ceremonies at McLaughlin's & Gormley's, better known as the M. & G., a Dorchester restaurant, and he puts the skills he learned there to work at his breakfasts. Many of his jokes, such as the one about God the Sponsor defraying the expenses, are as old as his skills, and their age prompts some Bostonians to decry the Bulger breakfasts as stale and routine things. If the material were the only criterion, the critics might have a point. But a performer is also judged on his delivery. Bulger has two humorous manners. In one, which is obviously humorous, he underlines his jokes with little sarcastic laughs. This is funny enough. His other manner, which is not obviously humorous, and is far funnier, depends on deadpan. In repose, Bulger's face has an uncanny blandness, like that of a deacon or of the financial officer of a corporation presenting the results of an audit. When this placid face delivers a punch line or an insult, the effect can be startling. I suspect that Bostonians who are tired of him as an m.c. are simply spoiled, and should get out of state from time to time—perhaps to New Hampshire in leap years—to see how other politicians handle a monologue.

Once we had been blessed, Bulger introduced the most important politicians in the room. "Joe Moakley had his house broken into," he said. John Joseph Moakley, a fellow South Bostonian, represents Massachusetts' Ninth Congressional District. In 1960, Bulger won the election to succeed Moakley in the State House of Representatives, and in 1970 he won the election to succeed him in the State Senate. "They stole a ring," Bulger continued. "I remember that ring. It was a little plastic one, with a whistle on it. He says it's worth ten thousand dollars now. The ring must be old enough to vote. Well, whoever did it is a no-good villain—unless he's my client. Then it'll be 'Well, Mr. Big Shot Congressman, what'd you put your house *there* for?' " He went on to John Silber, the tough-talking Kant scholar who is the president of Boston University, and whom Bulger supported in the 1990 governor's race. It is widely conceded by supporters and enemies alike that Silber blew the race with an intemperate television interview he gave in the last week of the campaign. "He's a good man, let me tell you," said Bulger, "and I know just how we're going to conduct the next campaign." He turned to Silber and added, "Have you ever been chloroformed before?" Bulger finished with a quorum of state senators, and explained that "members of the State House of Representatives are not going to be introduced—they can't vote for me."

The first guest to speak was John Cremens, Major General of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, one of those organizations, nominally military, like the First City Troop of Philadelphia, which once attracted the socially prominent. Cremens' main function was to introduce the subject of James Michael Curley, the four-time mayor of Boston, whose career, lightly fictionalized in Edwin O'Connor's novel "The Last Hurrah," created the nation's image of the big-city Irish pol. When the Ancient and Honorables refused to admit Mayor Curley as an ex-officio member, he called them "invincible in peace, invisible in war." Cremens and Bulger rehearsed this anecdote, and then Cremens got off a new line: "I keep friends like Bill busy, asking for favors—none of which are ever granted. But I suppose you're all familiar with that."

Bulger swung into "The Lonely Woods of Upton," prompting the crowd with each line of each verse and coaxing song from the reticent and the atonal. "Who's here from the *Globe* today?" he wanted to know when we finished. "Own up to it. They endorsed my opponent in the last election—a Republican veterinarian." He went on, "Our slogan was 'Even though everything's going to the dogs, this is no time to call in the veterinarian.' "

Bulger was told that William Weld, the new governor, would arrive shortly, and he announced the fact. "He's saying, 'What's it like in that club?' It's just like the Somerset Club." (The Somerset Club, which was founded in 1852 and is situated on Beacon Hill, is not much like the Bayside Club.) Governor and Mrs. Weld appeared, having survived the climb, and found seats at the head table. Bulger greeted Mrs. Weld by saying, "Don't be apprehensive, it's your husband we're after." There was some commotion in the audience. Bulger reacted instantly. "Someone's talking back—sounds like the House of Representatives. We'll have none of it in the Senate." Then back to the Welds. "I suppose, Governor, you just got in from Mass?" After Bulger gave a rendition of "The Bold O'Donohue," Weld stepped forward.



Governor Weld, a six-foot-plus strawberry blond, loomed over the lectern like a basketball player. During his remarks, Bulger stood off to Weld's right, grinning, attentive, waiting for opportunities to pounce. Weld's talk and Bulger's comments together constituted a mime of ethnic combat—highly stylized, like Tae Kwan Do. The contestants were Wasps, or Yankees, and the Irish. Bulger is a master of the form. Seven years ago, he told Elliott Richardson that he must be one of those folks who worshipped in "a wooden church," a phrase that encapsulated a whole sociology of architecture: white Congregationalist steeples, lean and clean as icepicks, as opposed to Roman Catholic piles of masonry, erected in many cases by parishioners who were masons. Weld performed his part capably. "It's no picnic being a Wasp, and I don't just mean here today," he said. "I've been dying to get this off my chest, but I feel I can share it with you. We're misunderstood. Thomas Finneran"—the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee—"suggested that my ancestors came over on the Mayflower. Nothing could be further from the truth. They sent a few domestics over to get the summer cottage fixed up."

Bulger interrupted the ethnic ballet to make this year's presentation—not of a pseudo *Globe* page but of an old picture of a much younger Weld and some male friends hoisting a beauty queen on their shoulders. The guys were all dressed in Playboy Bunny suits. Bulger maintained that the picture showed a meeting of Weld's Cabinet, and made sure that Monsignor MacNamara got a good look. "Did you see this, Father? I feel the same way." The next song was "The Old Bog Road." "Ever hear that one, Governor?" Bulger asked. "Well, you're going to sit there, and you're going to learn it."

From time to time, a non-politician made an appearance, and the largest ovation of the morning went to one of these, Marine Lance Corporal John Linehan, a twenty-three-year-old South

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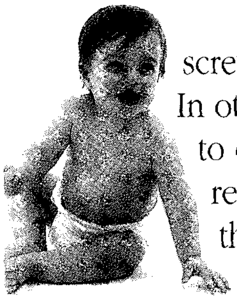

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Boston man, just back from Desert Storm. Corporal Linehan, who wore his navy-blue dress uniform, confessed that he couldn't sing. "That means you can't run for office," Bulger told him, and taught him the chorus of "The Rising of the Moon" anyway.

Representative Moakley tried to tell his version of the burglary, but his efforts were impeded by almost continuous byplay among Bulger, Weld, and Silber. Moakley said patiently, "This is the only function where you get introduced and then get totally ignored."

Bulger made much of the fact that Silber after his election defeat had become a columnist for the *Globe*. "Just among ourselves, he's really spying. You're going to come back and tell us what goes on at the *Globe*. Not much—it's an opium den." Ben Briscoe, a former Lord Mayor of Dublin, who is Jewish, presented Bulger with a green-frosted bagel. Bulger inspected it dubiously, and said, "We have some of those at the house from last year. That's how they became green."

Representative Edward Markey, from the Seventh Congressional District, read off a series of answers, followed by questions: "Alabama. Where did Governor Weld go to congratulate the Birmingham Six? Paul Cellucci"—Weld's lieutenant governor—"and the gardener. Who were the only two Italians ever to be in Bill Weld's home?"

"That's nothing," Bulger broke in. "I heard Susan Weld saying to Bill, 'I haven't seen this many Irishmen since I last visited the garage.' "

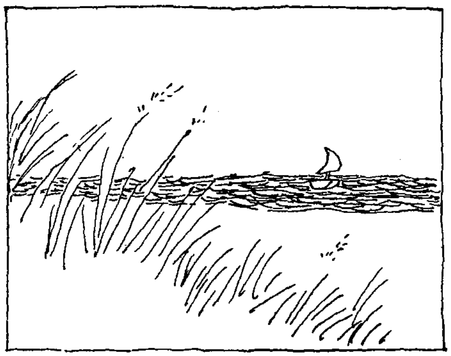
During all this talk, we were served food of a sort: slices of corned beef the color and texture of the tongues of shoes; vegetables boiled until they were beyond classification; scoops of green ice cream pierced with the poles of small green flags that said "Erin Go Bragh." Green bagels would have been better. There was a dull patch—lesser politicians telling jokes about the Lone Ranger, jokes about talking dogs in bars. Bulger let each one have his moment but didn't let things get too slack. "How many people here believe, with me, that Mayor Curley was innocent?" he asked. When Curley ran for his fourth term as mayor, in 1945, he was under investigation for mail fraud. He won anyway, then was convicted, and spent five months in jail. Bulger seemed genuinely surprised when Weld raised his hand. "There'll be a resolution through this week," Bulger said. "And you will be pardoning James Michael Curley."

The next song—it had to be sung at some point—was "Southie Is My Home Town," a vaudeville tune of eighty years ago, which is the South Bostonian anthem, at least to South Bostonians of an older generation:

> It will make you or break you,
> But never forsake you.
> Southie is my home town.

The last politician to arrive and speak was Raymond Flynn, the mayor of Boston. Flynn and Bulger are both from South Boston, and yet relations between them are delicate. The proximate cause of the delicacy is that Flynn is mayor and Bulger is not; the underlying cause is that Flynn appeals to voters outside Southie, and Bulger, for complicated reasons, does not, and very likely never will. Nevertheless, Bulger took the opportunity of the breakfast to endorse Flynn for a third four-year term. Flynn told another joke hinging on Weld's supposed belief that the Birmingham Six were from Alabama, and Bulger complimented him in his blandest manner, saying, "Very good. My advice is to get here on time. What are we supposed to do, keep notes?"

The songs came in medleys now, and the jokes were as ancient as the Honorable Artillery Company. "I once spoke to an aunt of Leverett Saltonstall," Bulger claimed, referring to a former United States senator from Massachusetts, many years dead, of impeccable Yankee stock. "I said I was in Los Angeles, and it was hot. She said, 'Well, of course it's hot; it's three thousand miles from the ocean.' It's either this or go to work. And, by the way, we're not afraid of the four-day workweek. We'll work the extra two days." He advised Weld, and Wasps generally, "You should register to vote. Of course, there's not enough of you. But you should do what we do. People here are registered right at the beginning, and sometimes they stay on after the end. The registrar once asked me, 'How come you have four hundred and seventy-three people registered in that three-decker across the street?' I said, 'Because the top floor is empty.' Want to sing another one, Governor?"



Bulger and Weld together [illegible] "Yankee Doodle Dandy," "You're a Grand Old Flag," and "Give My Regards to Broadway," then Bulger did a solo of "Galway Bay," which includes the following lines, more pertinent than the mood of foolery might suggest:

> O the strangers came, and tried to
> teach us their way;
> They scorned us just for being what
> we are.
> But they might as well be chasing
> after moonbeams,
> Or light a penny candle from a star.

It was one o'clock; the food was exhausted, and so was even Bulger's repertoire. "I worship the quicksand you walk on," the Governor told Bulger.

"The pardon will be on your desk Tuesday," Bulger told the Governor. We folded up our chairs, sidled down the aisles, and clambered to the ground.

Bulger was holding an open house later in the afternoon. The walk from the Bayside Club to Bulger's took me along the route of the St. Patrick's Day parade, and across much of South Boston. Many of the houses, some brick, some wooden three-deckers, flew American flags and Irish tricolors; one house had a green-white-and-orange Japanese kite dangling from the porch roof. The streets were thick with redheads. On many of the street corners there were plaques on poles, which I took at first to be street signs but which turned out to display stars and proper names. Each commemorated some South Boston man who had died in a war.

South Boston lies on a peninsula, with the Fort Point Channel to the north, and the bay to the south. Bulger's house, on East Third Street, is near the tip, in a sub-neighborhood called the Point, which is supposed to be ritzy. His block doesn't look it. Bulger lives in a white wooden one-and-a-half-story house with a brick façade; a two-and-a-half-story addition and a

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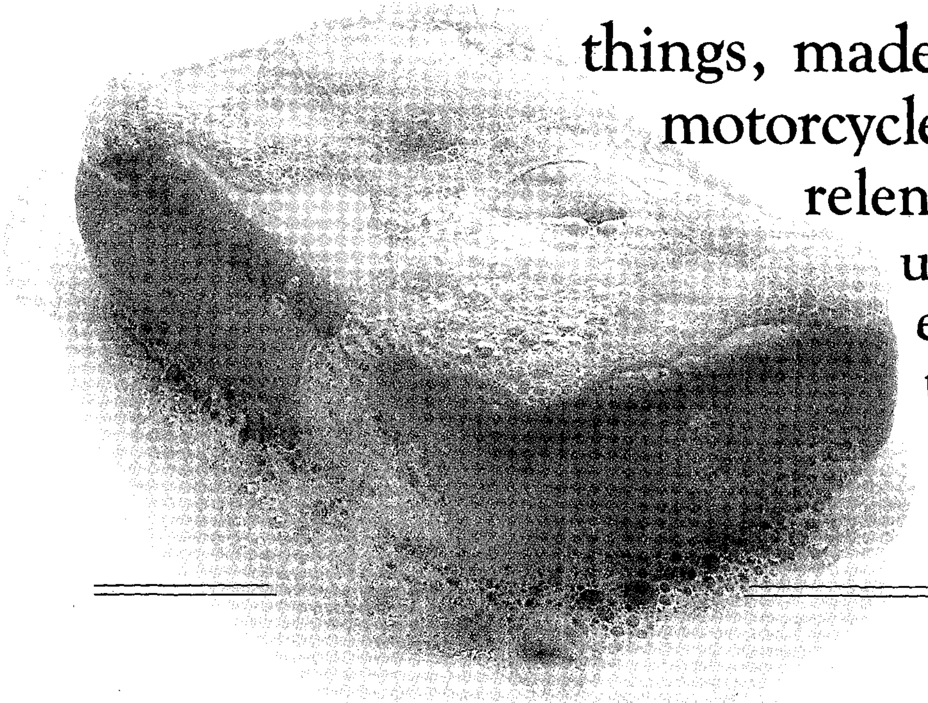

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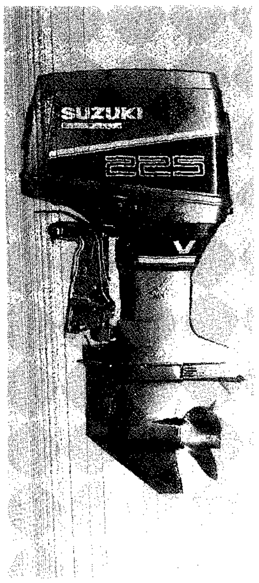

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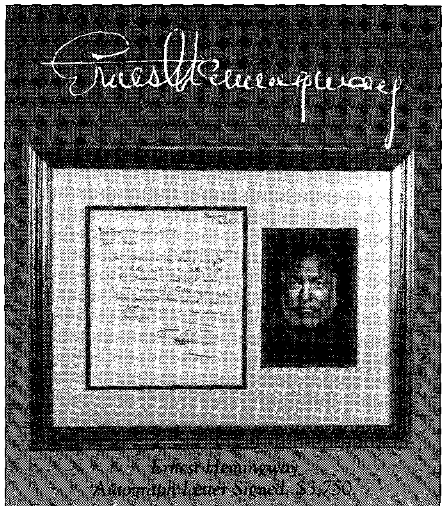

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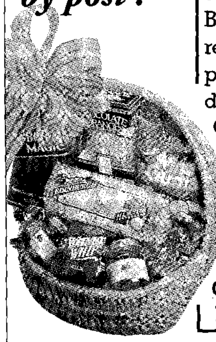

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deck have been tacked onto the back. Inside, I looked for a television, because one of the public details of Bulger's private life is that he did not allow a television in his house during the time his nine children were growing up. His preferred form of entertainment was reading, and he was determined that it would be theirs. (I later learned that there is now a television on the second floor. "My son Patrick brought it over," Bulger told me. "What can I do?") The house was crowded when I arrived, and it became steadily more crowded over the next hour. I met Mary Foley Bulger, William's wife of thirty-one years, and two of their children, but in the crush it was difficult to talk to anyone for more than five minutes, or in a tone softer than a shout. The living room had been given over to more musicians, and to Liam Harney, a champion Irish step dancer. Step dancing is a way of kicking your feet as high as possible while keeping your upper body absolutely rigid. It is admirable rather than enticing. Harney was certainly good at it: a couple of times, he nearly nicked the ceiling beam, six inches over his head, with a hard black shoe. When I stepped outside for a breather, I saw the holding tanks of the White Fuel Company, the planes making their approaches to Logan Airport, and mewing gulls.

VISITORS to Boston and its politics must adjust to several local peculiarities. One is the extraordinary level of rancor at which controversies in Boston are conducted. Fights are not daily occurrences, but when they do break out Bostonians go ballistic immediately. An instance of this launch-on-warning psychology which involved Bulger occurred three months before the St. Patrick's Day breakfast I attended. Shortly after the 1990 elections, Michael Dukakis, the outgoing governor, made a number of judicial nominations. Paul Mahoney, a quiet, courtly former assistant district attorney from East Boston and, more recently, Bulger's top aide, was tapped to be a district court judge. Alan Dershowitz, the Harvard law professor and controversial defense attorney, objected to the nomination, chiefly because of Mahoney's association with Bulger, and called Mahoney a "thug" and "Bulger's henchman." Bulger, in a letter to the Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, branded Dershowitz's charges "obscene, defamatory," and "odious." When Dershowitz and a second attorney, Harvey Silverglate, appeared before a session of the Governor's Council to challenge the nomination, Bulger, standing several feet away from them, added that they were "manipulative," "crafty," and "true, true connivers." After the session, Dershowitz told reporters that for Bulger to have called a pair of Jewish lawyers crafty and conniving was sl[illegible] anti-Semitic. "I think the Senate President knows how to be an anti-Semite without using the smoking-gun words," he said. (What calling an Irish politician a thug and a henchman might be, Dershowitz did not say.) Here was a crescendo, from silence to triple forte in two bars. I live in New York, where we know something about yelling; nevertheless, I was impressed.

Observers of Bulger were divided on the significance of the uproar. That it was significant none doubted, for Bulger, St. Patrick's Day apart, is a man of fastidious self-control. His reputation is for getting even, not for getting mad, and certainly not for getting mad in public. "Bill is shy," a fellow-politician told me (not for attribution, lest he be got even with). "He has a sense of himself as self-contained and self-restrained. He cares a great deal about not being drawn into emotional brawls. His anger is icy, not hot." Many Bulger-watchers were therefore of the opinion that for Bulger to have lost his cool before the Governor's Council was a sign that he was losing his poise generally. Other Bulger-watchers noted that his eruption had distracted everyone's attention from Mahoney, and that Mahoney subsequently won the approval of the Governor's Council, and his judgeship, on an 8–0 vote. In the Senate chamber the day after the Governor's Council meeting, Bulger professed to have been invigorated by the confrontation. It was "very therapeutic," he told his fellow-senators. "I've never felt better in my life."

Boston's appetite for acrimony is ultimately a legacy of the way the Yankees and the Irish have related to each other over the years. Weld and Bulger can play the Yankee-Irish feud as a vaudeville turn, and in recent years other groups have diversified Boston's ethnic mixture. Still, it is a matter of enduring importance that in the eighteen-forties the most self-

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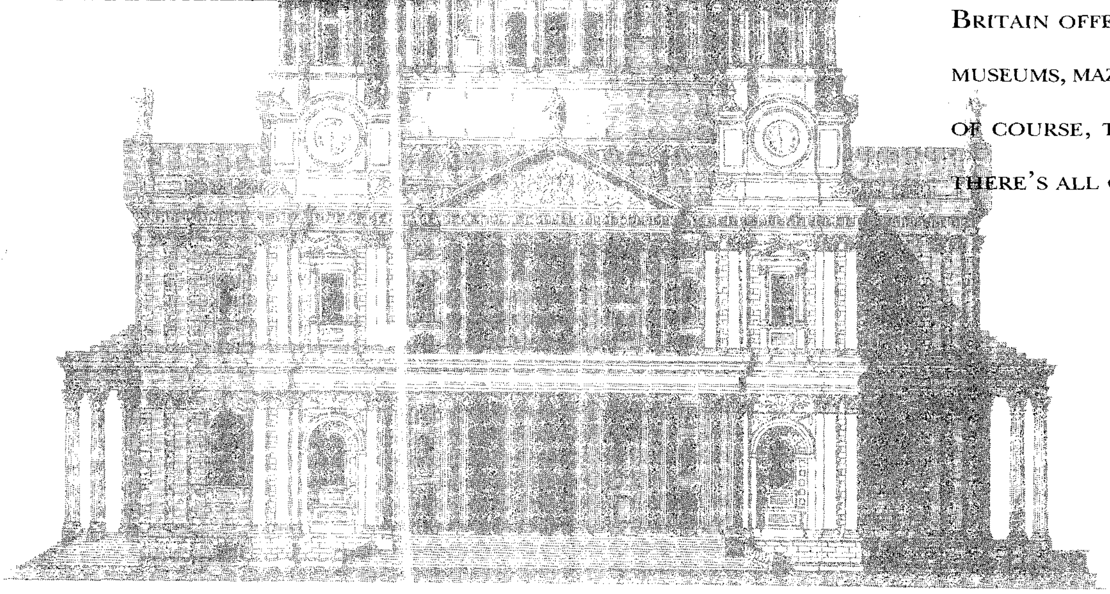

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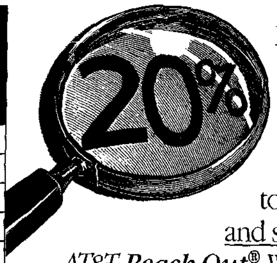

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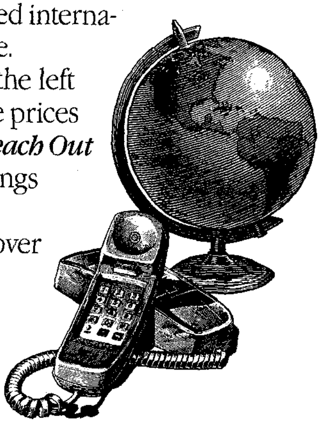

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There's the fabled British landscape, familiar even to first-time travellers from song, story, and poem — the wild Yorkshire moors, the contoured hills of Devon, the soft, misty Lake District, the green fields of the Cotswolds, the rugged Welsh mountains, and the heather-covered Highlands of Scotland.

There's the aura of antiquity, the intimations of a distant past that pervade the monastic ruins of Lindisfarne and Fountains Abbey, the mysterious standing stones of Salisbury Plain, the hill figures chalked into Dorset's rolling downs, the great medieval cathedrals at Winchester, Ely, and Canterbury. And the ubiquitous reminders of more modern history are everywhere, from Lord Nelson's statue atop Trafalgar Square to the Royal Pavilion at Brighton.

But the British heritage is not just in its architecture or cultural riches or quirky customs (although they still roll the cheese in Gloucestershire, dress the wells in Derbyshire, and light bonfires on Guy Fawkes Night). The best of Britain is as old as Stonehenge, as new as the Channel Tunnel. The British continue to make history in science and technology, define the new in theatre, film, and literature, pioneer in architecture, design, telecommunications, and transportation, and expand their economic, diplomatic, and political influence in world affairs.

Tony Stone Worldwide

Formal dress is de rigueur at Ascot

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THE PRIME MINISTER

I am delighted that *The New Yorker* is again producing a special section on "The Best of Britain," bringing its readers a taste of the United Kingdom and its attractions.

In 1990, Britain welcomed over three million American visitors, and over two million British visitors received a warm welcome in the United States. These visits serve to reflect and strengthen our friendship and sense of common heritage. Our close military coöperation in the Gulf and the warm welcome which Americans extended to Her Majesty the Queen during her State Visit earlier this year reflect our strong ties. So does the way we stood shoulder to shoulder in opposing the recent attempted coup in the Soviet Union.

The United Kingdom is the largest investor in the United States, while we are your largest investment market in the European community. Our contacts — whether in trade and tourism or sport and culture — enrich the lives of people on both sides of the Atlantic.

In 1992, we have a special anniversary to celebrate. It will be fifty years since the first squadrons of the United States Army Air Forces arrived in the eastern counties of Britain to help us meet a threat to our freedom and civilization. We hope to welcome not only veterans who flew from these British airfields, but also their sons, daughters, and grandchildren – so that they too may experience at first hand the friendship which exists between our two countries.

I congratulate *The New Yorker* on its special feature, "The Best of Britain," and I wish it continued success.

John Major

Rohan/Tony Stone Worldwide

London's Regent Street lights up for the holidays

LONDON AND ENVIRONS

Westminster, London's hub, is the royal and governmental seat of Britain — here are palaces, Parliament, and the residences of monarchs and prime ministers. The Strand links Westminster to the commercial heart of London, a single square City mile that includes Fleet Street, the Inns of Court, the venerable Bank of England, and the Tower of London. The West End is swinging, sophisticated, elegant, and entertaining: here is the greatest concentration of dramatic talent in the world, in dozens of theatres from Drury Lane to Shaftesbury Avenue. Here, too, are the great department stores, antique shops, boutiques, and promenades of Piccadilly, Knightsbridge, and Bond and Regent Streets.

To be tired of London, said Samuel Johnson, is to be tired of life; but the pace and variety of its attractions can overwhelm even the most intrepid tourist. When that happens, find a quiet corner in one of the city's great parks or gardens, drop into a pub for a pint and a game of darts, or head out into the countryside. In fine weather go south to Kew Gardens, west toward the lush pastures of the Cotswolds, or down toward the sea via the Downs, fine country for a ramble. Sample the stately homes and gardens that abound in the area — Woburn Abbey, whose grounds encompass a safari park; Waddesdon Manor, a Renaissance château whose aviary is stocked with rare birds; Luton Hoo in Bedfordshire, renowned for its fine collection of jewels and Faberge objets d'art; or Blenheim Palace, the stateliest of them all, ancestral home of the Duke of Marlborough and birthplace of Winston Churchill. Another day travel backward in time — to Hampton Court Palace, a red brick Tudor mansion favored by cardinals and kings; to Elizabethan Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare's birthplace; or to twelfth-century Oxford, "bell-swarmed, lark-charmed, rook-racked, river-rounded."

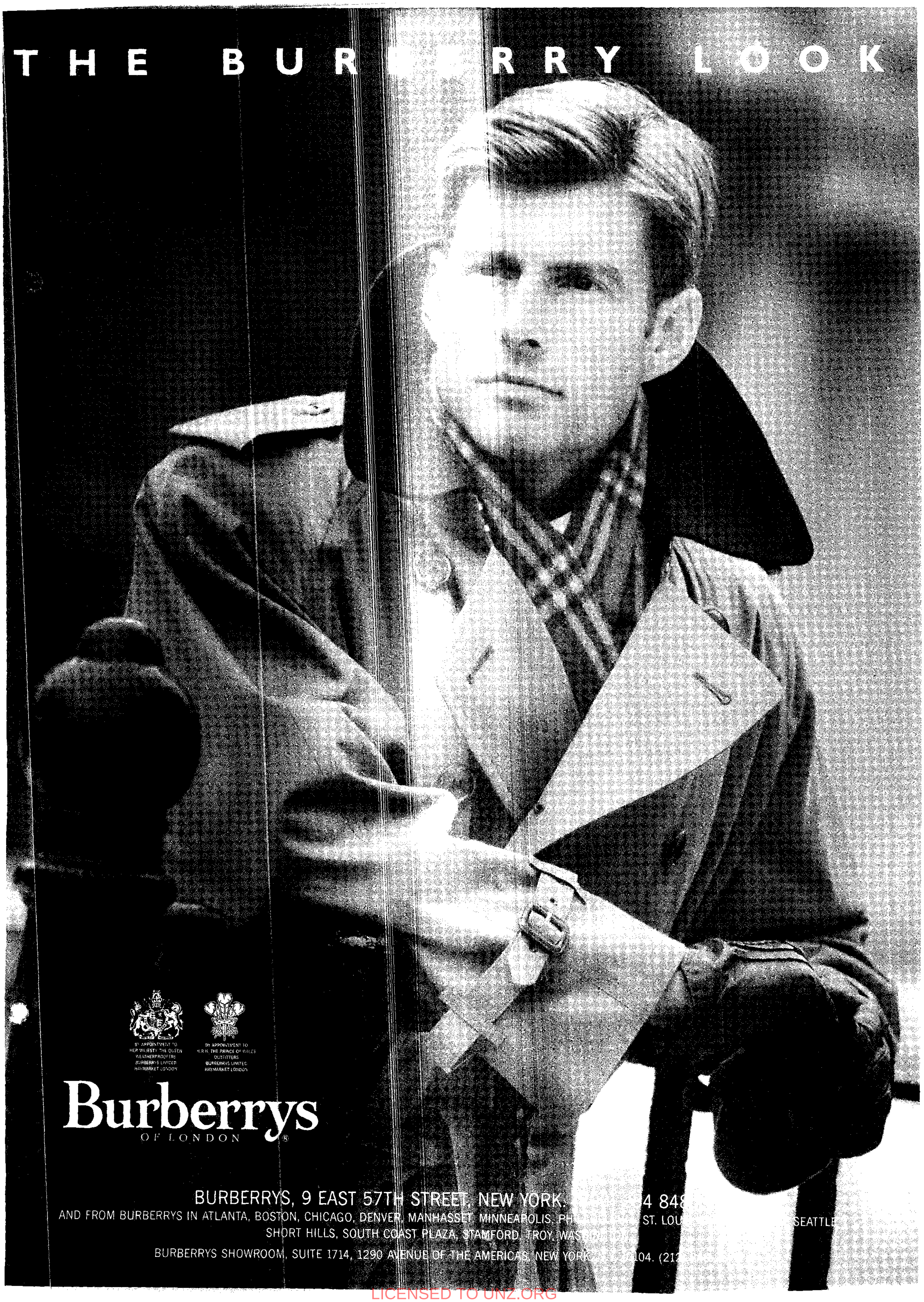
THE WEST COUNTRY

From Wiltshire to Land's End, the west country encompasses all of Britain's history, even its prehistory. Here are the paleolithic drawings of the Mendip caves and the great monoliths of Stonehenge and Avebury, the misty origins of Camelot, the spas of the Roman Empire, the medieval Guildhall of Exeter. Here, too, is the British Riviera, a palmy, sun-kissed region of sandy beaches, fine weather, and holiday accommodations to suit every taste.

Notable on the coast are Bournemouth, a Victorian city with two thousand acres of gardens; St. Mawes, a popular yachting town; and Lyme Regis, from whose Cobb, or stone pier, the French Lieutenant's woman gazed at the sea. The River Avon meanders through much of this country, and charming towns and villages line its banks and are tucked into green hills. Don't miss Bath, a splendid town whose Royal Crescent of thirty exquisite honey-colored Georgian houses and spring-fed baths

The Best of London

- The Elgin Marbles at the British Museum, the Brontë sisters at the National Portrait Gallery, the Gallery of Court Dress at Kensington Palace.
- St. Paul's Cathedral, Christopher Wren's masterpiece.
- The Leicester Square half-price ticket booth and the Fringe theatres' box office in St. Martin's Lane.
- The markets — Petticoat Lane on Sunday morning for cockles and mussels, linens and jewelry, rubbish and treasures; Portobello Road on Saturday for antiques and the rest of the week for flowers and produce; New Caledonia, Fridays only, for al fresco shopping, especially antiques; Camden Passage weekdays for trinkets and treasures from bygone eras.
- Public transportation — the tube, taxis, two-story buses.
- Spring flowers at the Chelsea Physic Garden.
- The Design Museum at Butler's Wharf, the Docklands.
- The Royal Ballet and Opera, Covent Garden.
- British tailoring — suits, shirts, and shoes from Bond Street, Jermyn Street, and Savile Row.



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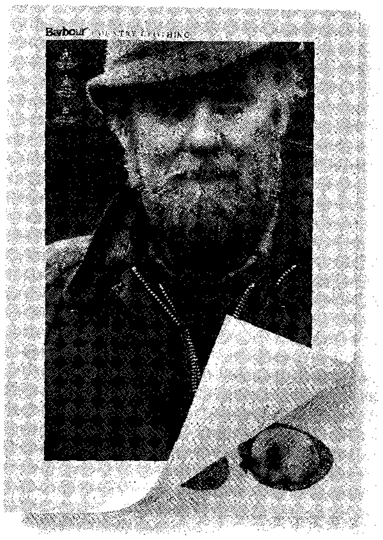

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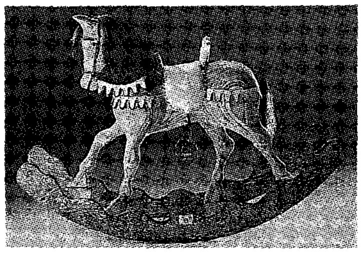

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The Best of the West

- Bath — the Crescent, the Roman Baths Museum and ancient Pump Room, and relics of the Roman conquest.
- Bristol — the Old Vic Theatre.
- Exeter — the Maritime Museum.
- St. Ives — the Barbara Hepworth Museum & Sculpture Garden, featuring work by one of Britain's best-known contemporary artists.
- Marazion — St. Michael's Mount, rising from the sea.
- St. Mawes — Trelissick Gardens.
- Salisbury — the Cathedral.
- Warminster — the Longleat Maze, designed by Capability Brown, around a great Renaissance country house, complete with safari park.

Ed Pritchard/Tony Stone Worldwide

A Roman soldier stands guard over the baths

dating from the first century vie with the antique market for a tourist's attention. Linger for tea in the lovely medieval town of Bradford-on-Avon or Cerne Abbas with its strange Giant chalked into the hillside overlooking the old abbey. Inspect the collection of Thomas Hardy memorabilia at the Dorset County Museum in Dorchester. Tour the swannery at Abbotsbury, meander through the artists' village of Chagford, take in the picturesque fishing villages of Cornwall, and stop by the great ports, rich in historical significance, of Plymouth and Bristol.

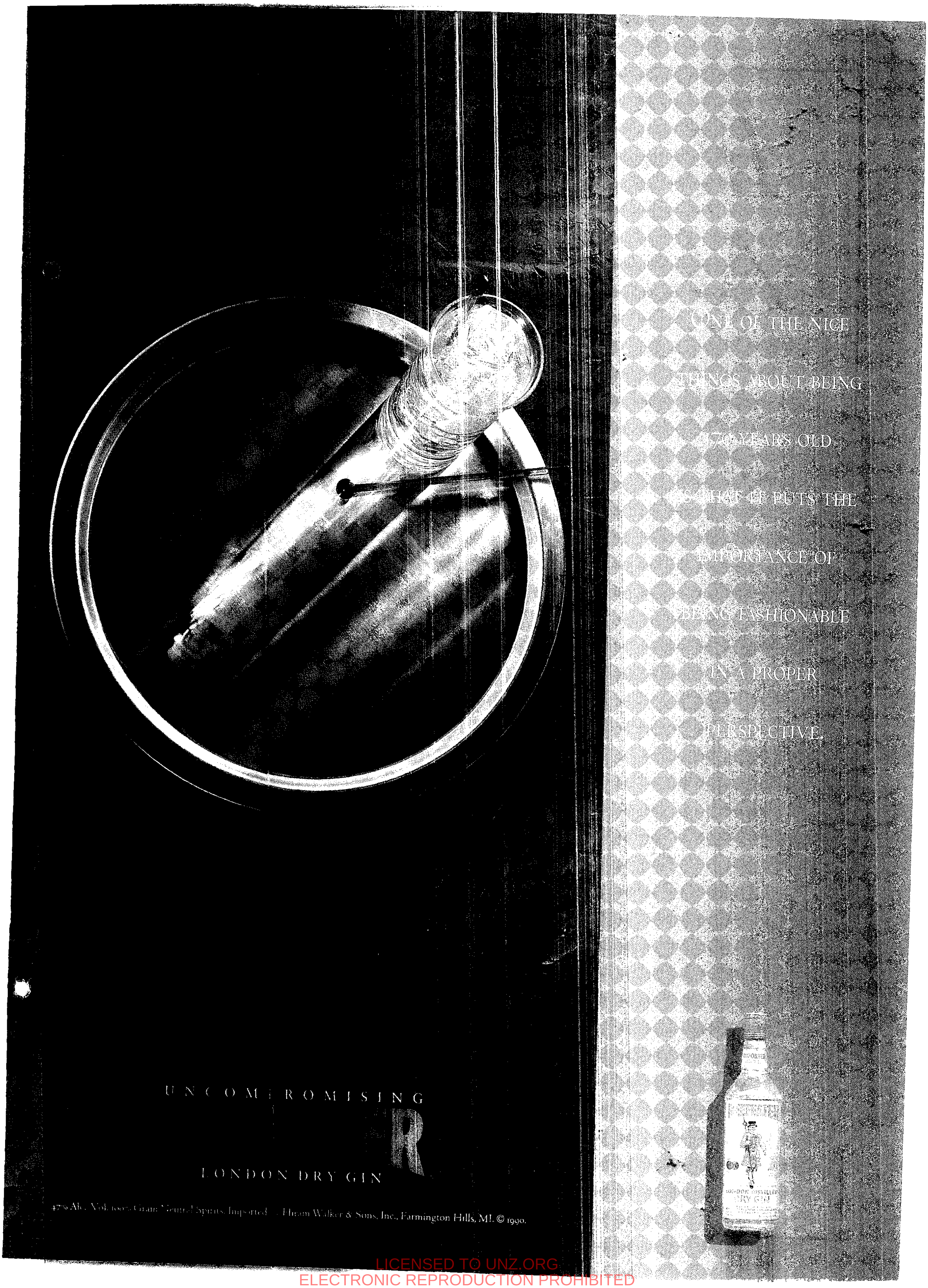
THE SOUTH

The southeast is the gateway to Britain. Medieval travellers arrived in the picturesque ports of Sandwich and Rye; today they come and go through Dover, Folkestone (where the Channel Tunnel will soon link France and England), and Southampton. Here are some of England's finest stately homes and country houses, whose gardens are as famous as their imposing façades and lavish interiors—Chartwell, Beaulieu, Knole, and Broadlands. The spa at Royal Tunbridge Wells is almost as famous as Bath, and its Georgian architecture is equally handsome. This region is also the nation's orchard—Kent's hops fields produce the makings of England's great beers and ales. Offshore are the Channel Islands and the Isle of Wight, popular holiday destinations.

Many of Britain's great cathedrals are found in this region, including two of the grandest, Winchester and Canterbury. Splendid castles dot the landscape, such as Leeds in Kent and Arundel in Sussex. And the country's naval heritage has been carefully preserved at Portsmouth; at the Royal Dockyard you can go aboard HMS Victory, Lord Nelson's flagship, or see Henry VIII's Mary Rose.

The Best of the South

- Whitstable oysters.
- Kent farmhouse bed and breakfasts.
- Sissinghurst Gardens.
- Royal Tunbridge Wells — Pantiles Arcade, a pedestrian street of Georgian storefronts, and historic houses, including Penshurst Place, Chartwell, Knole, and Hever and Leeds Castles.
- Hastings — Battle Abbey.
- Brighton — the Royal Pavilion.
- Ripley — the Royal Horticultural Society's Wisley Garden.



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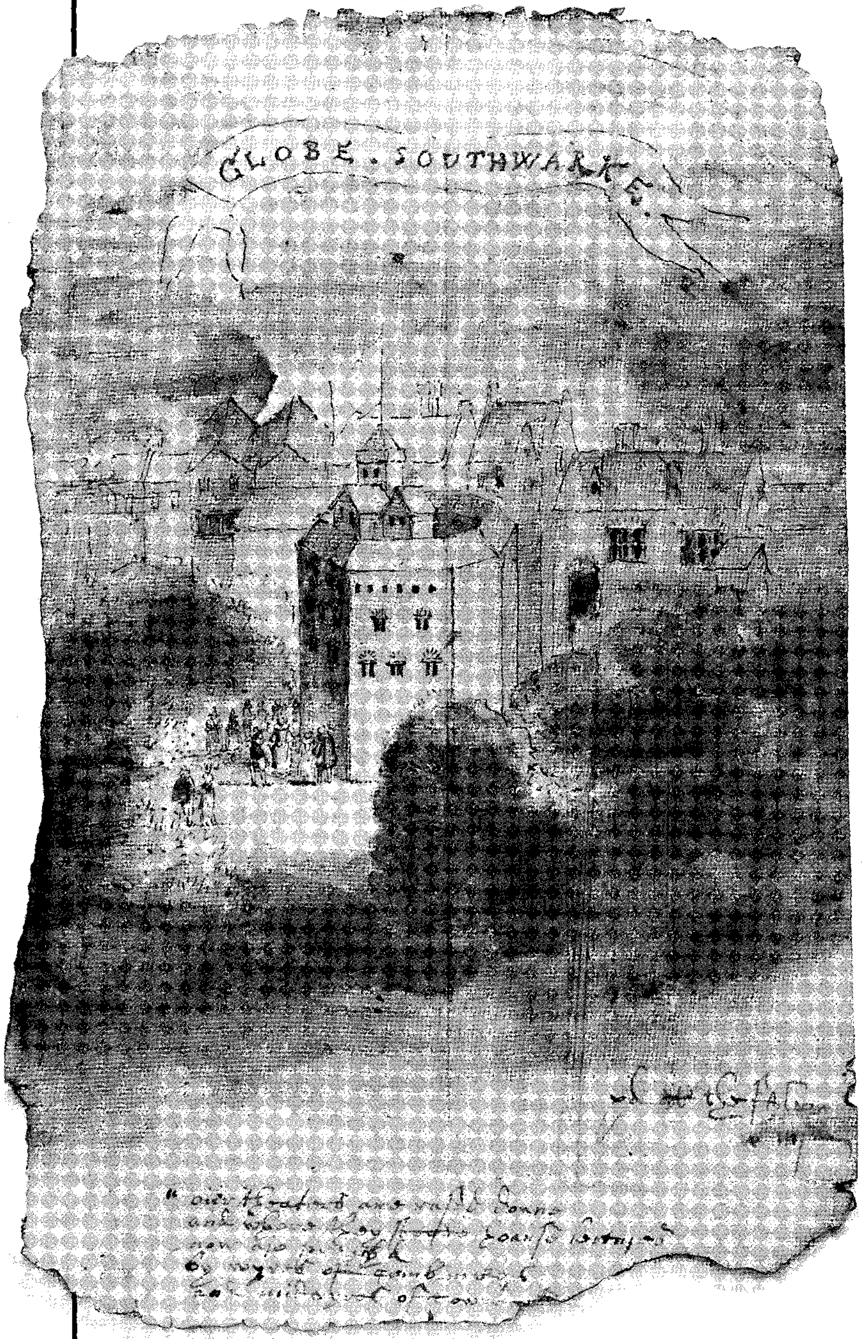

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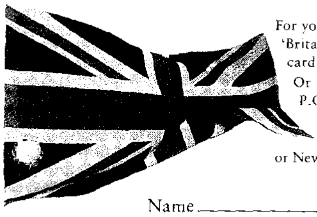

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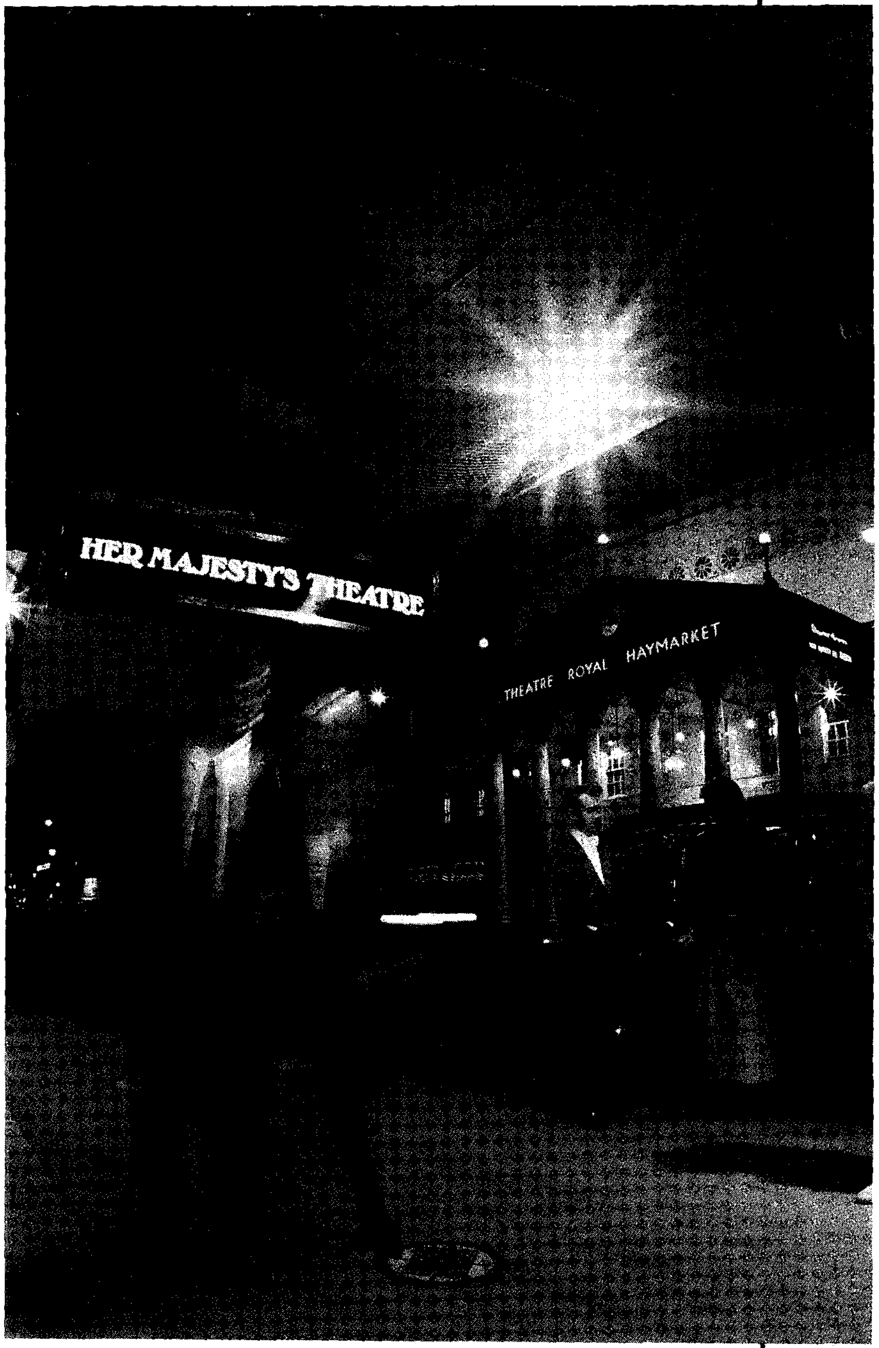

London’s Theatreland, 1991.

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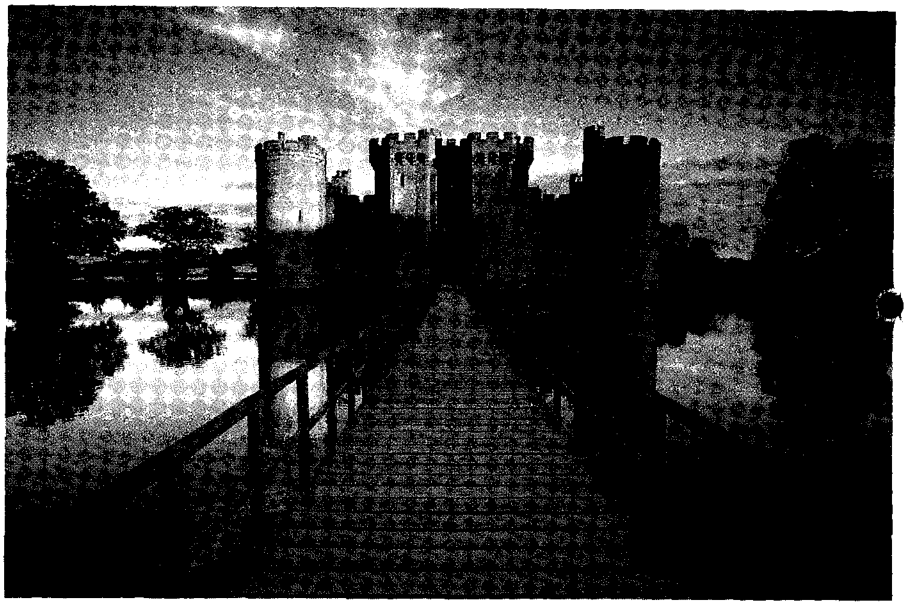

Patrick Ingrand/Tony Stone Worldwide

In a setting both spectacular and serene stands Bodiam Castle, Sussex

CENTRAL ENGLAND

The heart of Britain is here, in the sculptured hills of the Cotswolds, the busy cities of the Midlands, the thatched roofs of Stratford-upon-Avon, and the spires of Oxford. Many of England's principal rivers wind through the region. But apart from the big cities, central England is lush, green, and bucolic, and urban dwellers descend on it to hunt, fish, hang glide, pothole, and hike.

Travellers visit to see the great medieval castles, exquisitely preserved Elizabethan villages, attractive Regency cities, spas, and market towns, palatial homes, and country house hotels. This is the region where Britain's reputation for excellence in manufacture and design was born — Wedgwood, Minton, and Derby pottery and porcelain, Cotswold wool, Northampton shoes and boots, Birmingham leather.

Villages like Broadway, Stow-on-the-Wold, and Chipping Campden are a brief excursion from London. Shakespeare lovers flock to Stratford, especially during the spring and summer theatre season, but Birmingham's theatres, ballet, and symphony make it Britain's second city, culturally speaking.

EAST ANGLIA AND THE FENS

Cathedral cities, half-timbered houses, Constable landscapes, Gainsborough settings, a great university, a Queen's palace, horse farms, and stately homes — East Anglia is everyone's picture-book idea of what Britain used to look like.

The region, which includes neighboring Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire, is closer to London than its essentially rural and somewhat remote character might suggest. Some towns, such as Lavenham and

The Best of Central England

- Oxford — Bodleian Library, Ashmolean Museum, Blenheim Palace.
- Stratford-upon-Avon — Anne Hathaway Cottage, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Shakespeare's birthplace.
- Cotswolds — the historic towns of Broadway and Chipping Camden.
- Gloucester Cathedral.
- Birmingham — Museum and Art Gallery, Barber Institute of Fine Arts.
- Sadler's Wells — Royal Birmingham Ballet.
- Stately homes of Belvoir Castle and Chatsworth.

The Best of East Anglia

- Cambridge — Wren Library, King's College Chapel, Fitzwilliam Museum.
- Sandringham Castle.
- Bury St. Edmunds — Angel Corner museum, Abbey Gatehouse and Gardens.
- Ely — Ely Cathedral, Welney Wildfowl Trust.
- Sudbury — Gainsborough House, weavers' cottages.
- Lavenham — Guildhall, Priory.
- Norwich — open-air market, cathedral, Maddermarket Theatre.
- Suffolk — Aldeburgh Festival of Music and Arts, held in June.
- Norfolk — Lavender fields, from July through September.

Dedham, have preserved their sixteenth-century architecture, relics, and ambiance. Others, like Cambridge, are a surprising mix of the medieval and the modern. Newmarket and Chelsworth draw the horsey set, for sales, trials, and races. The Norfolk broads and the salt marshes and estuaries that edge the coast attract anglers, birders, and boaters. Scholars and students cluster in Cambridge — punting on the Cam is a lovely way to see what is arguably the prettiest university town in Britain, although some might say that Norwich, with a spectacular Norman cathedral spire that dominates the city, is a close second.

Peter Scholey/Tony Stone Worldwide

Punters by Mathematical Bridge, Cambridge

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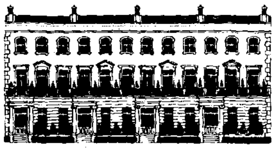

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Colin Raw/Tony Stone Worldwide

North Yorkshire's River Aire in winter

THE NORTH COUNTRY

The north of England is rugged and beautiful. It is also bustling and commercial, with the great manufacturing cities of Manchester, Liverpool, and Leeds at its heart. These are the centers of Britain's textile and transportation industries, as well as a secondary focus of TV and film production. It was the birthplace of British Christianity (not to mention the Beatles) and, according to legend, the final resting place of King Arthur and his knights; it also boasts York, the best-preserved medieval city in Britain. The region's Roman past lives on in Hadrian's Wall, built in the year 122 to defend the northwest edge of the Roman Empire.

The north is a mecca for literary pilgrims — it is Brontë, Wordsworth, and Coleridge country. Here are the solitary North York Moors (the most popular national park in Britain), the rich green valleys of the Yorkshire dales, and the region known as

The Best of the North

- Liverpool — Walker Art Gallery, Beatles Magical History Tour, Albert Docks.
- Manchester — Air and Space Museum.
- Leeds — cricket at Headingley, the International Piano Competition, Capability Brown park, Robert Adam interiors at Harewood House.
- Haworth — the Brontë parsonage, church, museum, and waterfall.
- Wensleydale — Middleham Castle.
- York Minster.
- Ripon — Fountains Abbey.
- Grasmere — summer games, held in mid-August.
- Northumberland — Holy Island of Lindisfarne.

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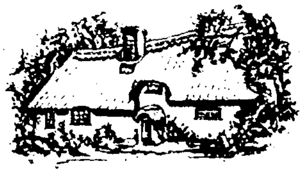

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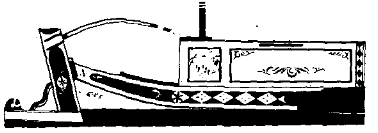

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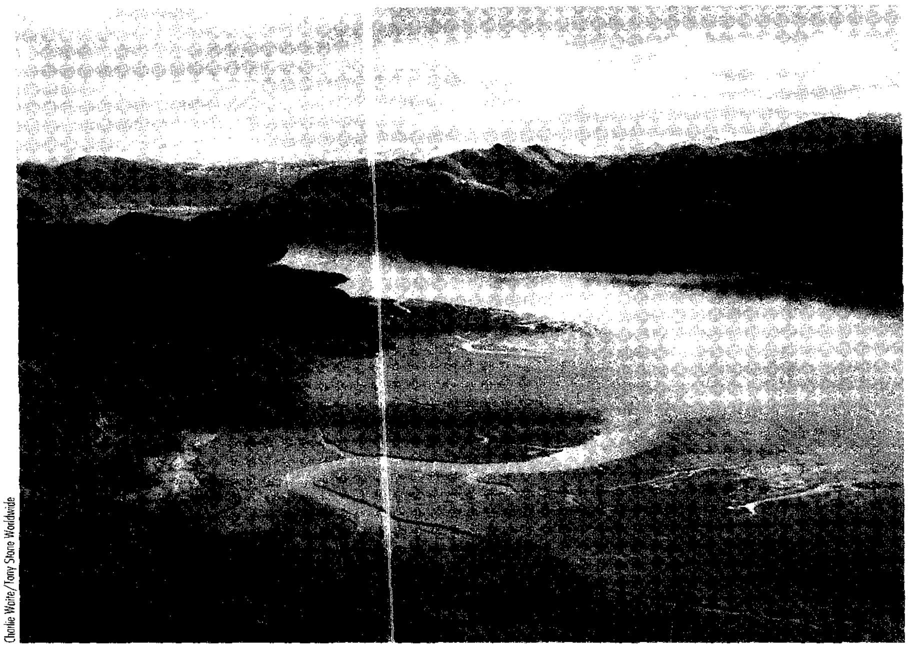
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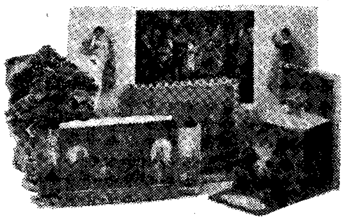

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❦ *Jane Adams is an author and journalist whose new book, I'm Still Your Mother, will be published next year by Delacorte.*

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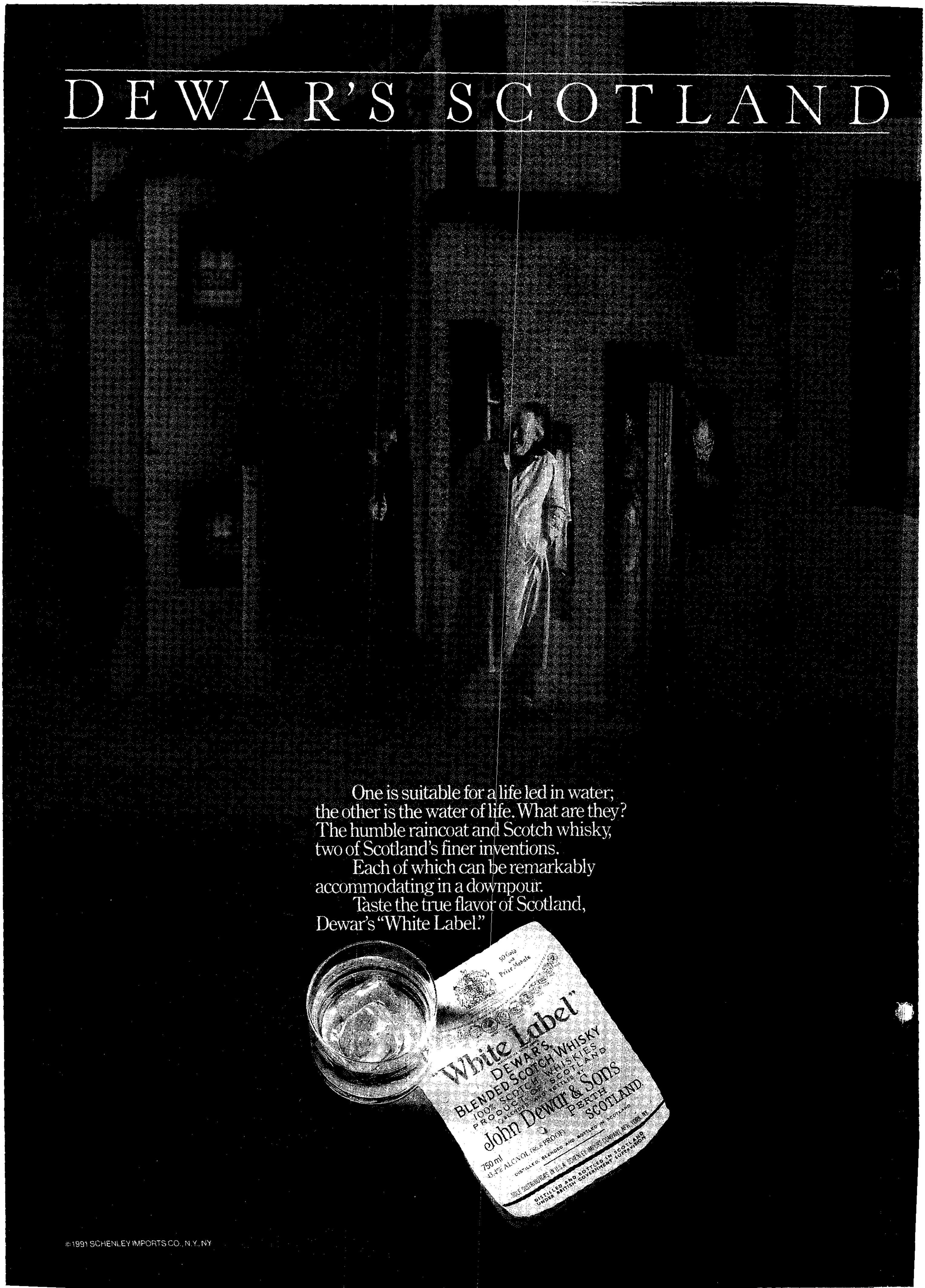
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assertive group of newcomers in the history of American immigration encountered in Boston America's most self-confident and cohesive old-stock élite. Boston Yankees and Boston Irish ground against each other like tectonic plates, and grinding remains the preferred form of social intercourse in Boston today, even for Bostonians whose ancestors did not come from East Anglia or Galway.

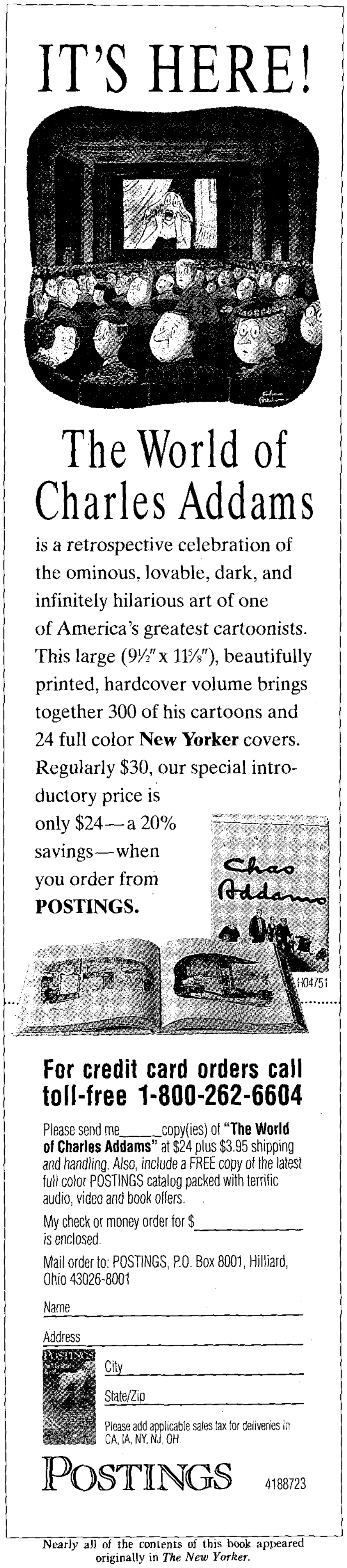
Another fact of Boston life is that it is a small town, with a small town's self-absorption. Leverett Saltonstall's aunt was not the only Bostonian to think that Los Angeles is three thousand miles from the ocean. This can come as a surprise, because Boston puts up such a good front. Culturally and financially, it presents itself as a world city. Yet the population of Boston proper is little more than half a million. As an ecological system, Boston resembles not London or Paris, or even Dallas or Chicago, but Cleveland, Indianapolis, Phoenix. Everybody knows everybody, if not personally, then as a classifiable type. What is more, everybody has known everybody for years. Everybody is convinced that at least half his fellow-Bostonians have some grudge against him. Generally speaking, everybody is right.

This is pertinent to Bulger, because one of the judgments most commonly made of him—by all his enemies and by many of his admirers—is that he is parochial. "The most distinctive thing about him is his parochialism" was a typical formulation I heard. "It is the cause of his problems, and the source of his strengths." (This was the opinion of a well-wisher, who nevertheless wished to remain anonymous. Bostonians' favorite topic of conversation is each other, and yet, unless they are brawling, they prefer to converse behind each other's back.) Bulger is parochial, but so is everyone else in Boston. That goes for the cosmopolites who imagine that they are emancipated because they scan the foreign news in the paper each morning. Once they're done, they dig into the local news, and then get on the phone for the real story.

The small town is composed of yet smaller towns, whose inhabitants know each other not only by repute but by shared values and experiences. The smaller towns can be defined ethnically, in a very general way, but finer distinctions have to be made, too. Seventy years ago, South Boston and Roxbury (which was Curley's base) were both Irish neighborhoods, but that does not mean they always got along. On encountering hecklers in South Boston, Curley told them, "You are nothing but a pack of pickpockets and second-story workers. . . . You are a bunch of milk-bottle robbers and doormat thieves." The reason the Irish never built a political machine in Boston comparable to Tammany Hall in New York is that each Irish neighborhood supported a machine of its own, which was forever jockeying for advantage against all the others. Many of the smaller towns have changed their ethnic character over the years while retaining their distinctness. Roxbury is now black. One of the least changed, and also one of the most distinct, is South Boston.

The Bulger family moved to South Boston in 1938, when Bill Bulger was four years old. His father, James Joseph Bulger, was born in the North End, a neighborhood northeast of Beacon Hill, while his mother, Jean McCarthy, was from Charlestown, a discrete tract of Boston, separated from the main mass of the city by the Charles River. The Bulgers were drawn to South Boston by the prospect of living in Old Harbor Village, the second federally sponsored public-housing project in the country. Old Harbor Village had been built at the instigation of John McCormack, South Boston's congressman. He pointed out to F.D.R. that his South Boston vote in the 1936 Presidential election had been cut by a third-party candidate backed by the right-wing radio priest Father Charles Coughlin. South Boston, McCormack argued, needed stroking. Old Harbor Village was built in the Lower End—the non-ritzy half of the peninsula—and opened its doors in 1938.

The Bulgers qualified for residence



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Nearly all of the contents of this book appeared originally in *The New Yorker.*

in the project because James Bulger had lost part of an arm in a railroad-yard accident as a young man, and had worked only part time since then. (This was not the first accident in the history of the family: Jean's father had been killed in a shipyard when she was a girl.) Compared with the grim high rises that became the norm for housing projects in the fifties and sixties, Old Harbor Village, which is now called the Mary Ellen McCormack Project, after the congressman's mother, looks positively bucolic: three-story brick apartment buildings lining small, curving streets. The Bulgers moved into a three-bedroom apartment at 41 Logan Way.

James Bulger was a taciturn, undemonstrative man. "Words were not expendable with him," Fred Kelley, a financial adviser who as a child knew the Bulger family, told me. Jean Bulger, who was two decades younger than her husband, was the outgoing one. But she kept the children of the project, including her own, on their toes. "Both Bulgers would listen to you," Kelley said, "and not just say yes, what a nice boy you were. They were sharp."

Bill Bulger inherited that sharpness, but he might never have put it to use had he not made a decision, at the age of fourteen, to get out of the public-school system. South Boston High School had been a focus of local life since it opened, in 1901, but it was a jock school, and the last school most of its students attended. Young men in South Boston typically went on to factory jobs, or patronage jobs with the public-transit system. (Paul McDevitt, a former lobbyist, described the local networking thus: "Republicans have classmates, Democrats have patronage.") Bulger put himself in the hands of the Jesuits of Boston College High School and Boston College. The most important Jesuit in his life was Father Carl Thayer, who taught the honors course in Greek. Bulger developed an imitation of Thayer, which he would perform for the class before Thayer arrived for a lecture. But Bulger never forgot him. Years later, Thayer tutored two of Bulger's children in Greek when they were in high school. For the last ten years of Thayer's life, Bulger visited him nearly every month, and when Thayer died, at the age of seventy-five, last year, Bulger and his family attended the wake and the funeral Mass.

Bulger never forgot Father Thayer's subject, either. "My husband was running a phone bank for Jesse Jackson in Arkansas in 1988," I was told by Judy Meredith, a Boston lobbyist. "He had a college kid under him who would read 'The Peloponnesian Wars' when he should have been working the phones. The kid said, 'I got turned on to this thing by someone from your state. He came to my school to give a lecture, and said that everything that affects us today—ambition, greed—is in this book.' My husband asked, 'Who was it?' The kid said, 'Bill Bulger.' My husband said, 'Yeah, I know him.' " (The story had a political coda: Judy Meredith's husband told the young man, "I also know him well enough to know that he'd tell you to close the book now and go back to the phones.") Bulger finished his freshman year at Boston College, then spent two years in the Army, from 1953 to 1955, to earn the G.I. benefits, which allowed him to graduate and go on to Boston College Law School.

Hard work and ambition lifted Bulger out of the blue-collar track. His brother, James, Jr., five years his senior, took an alternative route. In 1956, James, known as Whitey, was arrested for a bank-robbing spree that covered Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Indiana. He spent nine years in federal prisons, three of them in Alcatraz. When he was released, his brother Bill got him a job as a courthouse janitor, and since 1965 Whitey has not been charged with anything more serious than traffic violations. He has, however, been under the observation of assorted local, state, and federal law-enforcement bodies. In 1986, the President's Commission on Organized Crime called him "a reputed killer, bank robber, and drug trafficker," and cited him as the head of one of three groups that controlled Irish organized crime in Boston. The F.B.I. has made scratchy tapes of bugged mafiosi saying things like "Whitey . . . will clip his fuckin' head" and "Whitey's got the whole of Southie." Since the arrest of key members of the Patriarca clan, the Boston family of La Cosa Nostra, some law-enforcement mob-watchers believe that the elder Bulger is Boston's most powerful mobster. In January 1990, agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Internal Revenue Service, along with Boston police, raided several sites in South Boston and Quincy, reportedly trying to build a case against Whitey for drug trafficking, tax evasion, and money laundering.

Bill stayed his own course. He entered law school two years after Whitey entered prison. In the summer of 1960, he married Mary Foley, who had been his sweetheart since his junior year in high school. That fall, he also made his first run for office, winning the seat in the House vacated by Joe Moakley. Bulger spent ten years in the House. That stretch of time and his first four years in the State Senate form a unit. Bulger early on marked himself off from his colleagues by his speeches. I have heard the Senate in session and the level of wit is best indicated by the tendency of senators to say "But, seriously," after their grimmest utterances; I can imagine the House; and I can well believe that the young Bulger stood out in both bodies like a diva in a church choir. He also marked himself off by never quite behaving like one of the boys. "To visualize his offices in those days," recalls a friend of long standing, "think of a study carrel in a very orderly Jesuit law library. His offices didn't look lived-in. You could tell he was doing something else with his spare time." That something else was spending his evenings with his family, instead of with his colleagues in Beacon Hill watering holes.

"Bulger is a political recluse," the friend continued. "He is not hail-fellow-well-met, not gregarious. He is still very shy today; he was *really* shy then." Bulger also did not cultivate reporters. David Wilson, a former columnist for the *Globe*, told me, "When you're covering the State House for the *Globe*, important people behave like cocker spaniels, and you're the handler. Bulger appealed to me because he couldn't have cared less about the papers."

In this period, Bulger was not associated with controversial issues. He looked out for his district, and for the kind of people—urban poor and working-class—who populated it. One of the few fights he got into at that time came at the end of his first term in the Senate, and a local situation provoked it. Bulger wanted the Senate to give a hearing to a rent-control bill, and the leadership had promised him that the bill would come up before the final session adjourned. Bulger was backing it because he had got a letter from a tenant of Old Harbor complaining that there was not much left of his pension after he paid his rent. When it became clear to Bulger that the Senate leadership was not in fact going to bring the bill up, he filibustered. The Democrats caucused, and discussed Bulger, in his presence, in an irritated third person. The Majority Leader told him he was ruining himself. The unpleasantness was momentary. The bill did not pass, and Bulger had not expected that it would, but he had forced it to be given a hearing. He had been serving his constituents, and the social class from which he had risen. "He never forgot the rule 'I dance with the girl that brung me' " is how the friend of long standing puts it. Following that rule lengthened his tally of reëlections, and kept him out of trouble—the rent-control bill aside—with the powers

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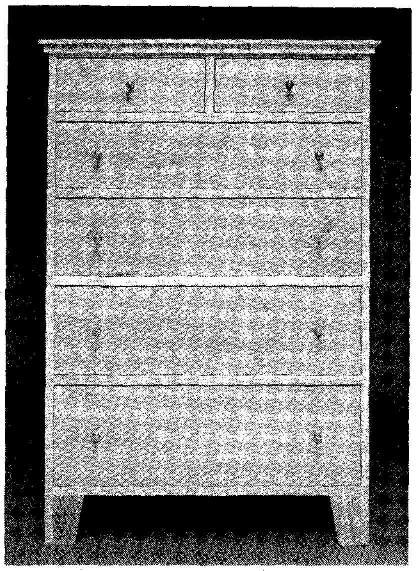

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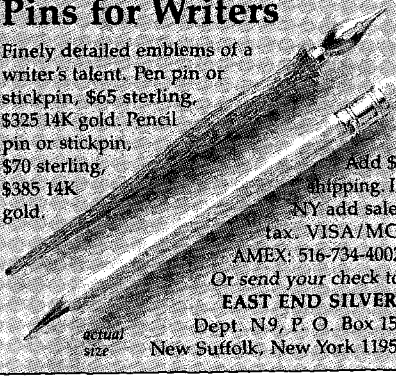

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that were. In 1974, Bulger was given the job of Whip, the No. 3 post in the Senate leadership.

I HAD breakfast with Bulger one morning in April, as the buds of the magnolias on Commonwealth Avenue were getting ready to pop. All that spring, state politics had been dominated by one overriding fact: Weld, who had won election by pledging not to raise taxes, had to find some way, with the Legislature's help, to cut spending. After some early squabbles about how much, if any, of the cuts should come out of higher education, and how much Weld was paying his Cabinet Secretaries, politics entered a period of doldrums as the House went to work on the budget. Bulger and I were to meet in the Four Seasons Hotel, across from the Public Garden, at seven-thirty. I was early. He was earlier.

Away from the Bayside Club and without the mediation of a mike, he spoke in a soft voice—so soft that the ends of his sentences were sometimes lost. He let pauses lengthen until he was certain he had something he wanted to drop into them. Words may have been more expendable with him than they had been with his father, but he still kept track of them. Interviewing him was not like pulling teeth; it was more like cleaning them—slow, careful work without much idle conversation.

"I had a couple of things going for me, as far as getting into politics is concerned," he said. "First, my father advised against it, and that usually helps, doesn't it? I found politics interesting. I remember pushing myself into the Hotel Brunswick to see Curley during his last run for mayor." That was in 1955, when Bulger was twenty-one. On the face of it, the resemblance between the two politicians is slight. Curley was a turbulent, demagogic man, with a turbulent career. (The subtitle of "I'd Do It Again," his memoirs, was "A Record of All My Uproarious Years.") Bulger tried to explain the connection. "There was a sense that people like him had a role to play. He brought people out of the shantytowns. He stood out against the powers that be, like the *Herald*, which was then the dominant paper. It's not dominant now. The *Globe* is dominant now." Pause. "I like to say that the *Globe* is the *Herald* with verbs. That's enough to annoy both of them." He considered his own good fortune in never having had to run against an incumbent. "The first times I ran for the House and the Senate, I was able to take a vacant seat. That's better in a small town, where memories last." A non-political story led back to politics. "I got Ted Williams' autograph once. 'What do you expect me to sign this with,' he said, 'my fingernails?' Then he said, 'You a booer?' There'd be thirty-nine thousand people cheering him, and two booing, but that's what he'd hear. Like us." Pause. "I do all right. Hell, they elect me."

A question about Father Thayer made him think of Plutarch's life of Themistocles. "I've always remembered the passage where Themistocles' father shows him the old galleys drawn up on the beach, and tells him that's what becomes of leaders when the people have no further use for them. I love to quote this stuff; it annoys them." Presumably, the *Herald* with verbs. "They say I use Bartlett's. I like that story because I think a little of that braces you for whatever happens in politics. You become so conspicuous that if you walk down the street and don't notice someone, you seem oblivious, and he resents it. There are no surprises for a person who reads this sort of thing."

I asked him about the politics of dancing with the girl that brung him.

"I don't think fidelity to the little platoon is inconsistent very often, if ever, with commitment to the greater good. Unfortunately for us locally, there's always the perception that it is. For example, when I became Senate President the question they all asked was 'How can Bulger reconcile his insular South Boston viewpoint with the larger Commonwealth?' That came from busing."

I had intended to ask Bulger about Boston's experience with busing and its effect on him, for it was the turning point of his political life, but he beat me to it. The subject had risen up like a shoal. Bulger could talk about politics with professional interest, and a surprising degree of melancholy, and he could treat the press with caustic shorthand. Busing, though, still aroused passion: he resented the policy; he resented even more the contempt that had been directed at South Boston and its leaders for resisting it; and the policy and the contempt still rankled, a decade and a half later. Before busing, Bulger had been a moderately successful state legislator, bright, witty, reserved—well thought of whenever anyone outside his district or the State House thought of him, which was not often. Busing thrust him into the limelight. The man who cared deeply about not being drawn into emotional brawls found himself at the center of the most emotional brawl in the postwar history of Boston.

Busing is no longer a red-hot national issue. School choice, which was once a slogan used only by busing's most desperate opponents, has become an educational buzzword, without racial connotations. Busing itself is sometimes criticized now by blacks as well as whites. But from the mid-sixties to the mid-seventies busing was seen as the only way to break down the segregation of Northern cities. To oppose busing was to sin against the light.

On June 21, 1974, Judge W. Arthur Garrity, Jr., of the Federal District Court, found that the Boston School Committee, the elected body that ran Boston's public schools, had "knowingly carried out a systematic program of segregation affecting all of the city's students, teachers and school facilities." The first desegregation plan, Phase I, sought to achieve racial balance in schools attended by forty per cent of the city's students. The student body of South Boston High was notably imbalanced: between 1964 and 1974, only three blacks had attended the school. Under Phase I, South Boston High was paired with Roxbury High, in the heart of the black community. Sophomores from Roxbury would be bused to South Boston, while juniors from South Boston would be bused to Roxbury. Seniors at both schools could choose to go to either school.

On the afternoon of September 12th, the first day of school that fall, buses carrying black students from South Boston High back to Roxbury were pelted with eggs, bottles, and rocks. Things went downhill from there. October 2nd saw a riot in the South Boston High cafeteria. Three days later, members of the Police Tactical Patrol Force, an élite riot squad assigned to the flash points of the busing controversy, trashed a bar on Dorchester Street in South Boston, where they believed troublemakers hung out; twelve customers went to the hospital with head injuries. Two days after that, a

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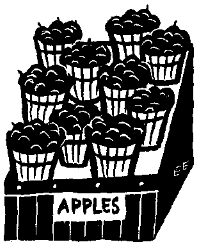
black man driving through South Boston was chased from his car by a white mob at a light and severely beaten. On December 11th, a seventeen-year-old white student was stabbed by a black student in South Boston High. Every school morning, South Boston women in their nightdresses posted themselves along the bus route to give the finger to the buses as they passed. Administrators put metal detectors at the school doors and debated whether the hair picks that black students wore should be considered potential weapons. In this atmosphere, teachers tried to lead their charges through "Antigone" and "Animal Farm."

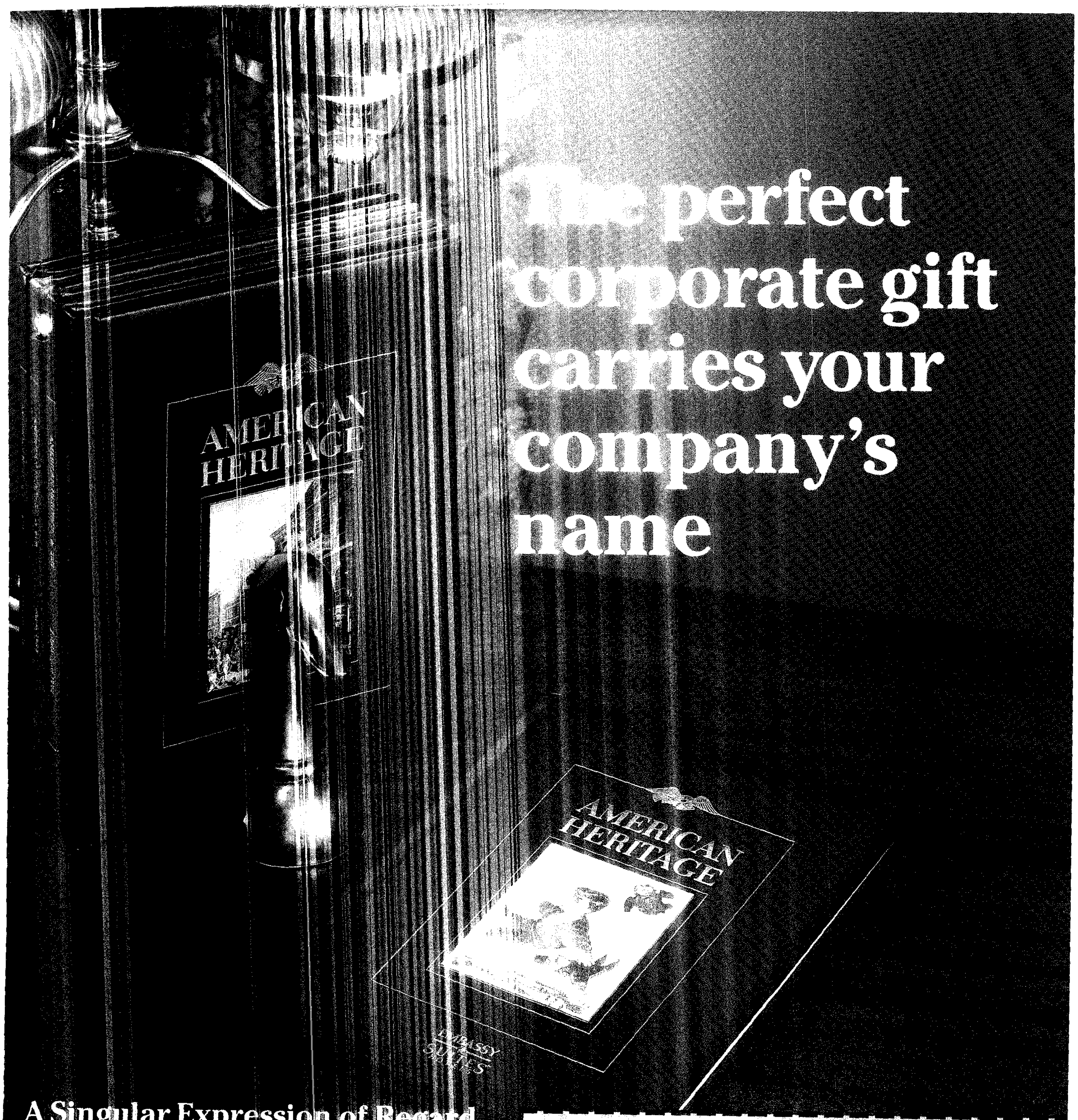
Judge Garrity assigned the planning of Phase II, which would cover all the schools in the city, to a panel of four masters, informally led by Edward McCormack, Jr., a nephew of Representative McCormack and a former State Attorney General. The new plan, brokered by McCormack, proposed integrating South Boston with black students from nearby Dorchester, rather than from Roxbury. On May 10, 1975, Judge Garrity announced that he approved much of the masters' handiwork but had decided to keep South Boston and Roxbury in the same district. The second academic year of busing was as tumultuous as the first. A story made the rounds (I heard it from two different Bostonians sixteen years later) of a cop who bought a boat with his overtime pay and christened it Phase I, and then bought a second and christened it Phase II.



At breakfast, Bulger acknowledged, in passing, the racial ugliness that had churned to the surface, but he insisted that the primary motive of busing's opponents had been the desire to control their children's education. "The nub of our opposition—and no one will ever concede this to us, but I have chapter and verse to prove it—was the uprooting of our children and sending them across the countryside on the basis of skin color," he said to me. This was the same line that he had taken then. "Opposing busing," he said in a March, 1975, speech in Dorchester Heights, on the eve of a national anti-busing rally in Washington, "does not mean that we bear any ill will to black children or children of other racial strains. It does not mean that we oppose the ideals of integrated education. It does not mean that we are unwilling to share our educational facilities with children from other neighborhoods who may wish to use them. . . . It does mean that we are unwilling to yield to the demands of a judicial fiat that strips away the parents' natural rights." The argument from natural rights was a way of defending the small town while being contaminated as little as possible by the brawl, and Bulger clung to it with the determination of the kid who sent himself to Boston College High while his brother was heading for Alcatraz.

He also clung to the argument that liberals who denounced racism from the security of the suburbs were hypocrites. "I always maintained that the people who saw us as railing against busing were exactly like us," he told me. "They just didn't realize it. Would the people of Wellesley give their children up to a judge and say, 'Here, do what I do'?" Wellesley, the sleek surburban town to the west of Boston, became for Bulger an icon of moralizing irresponsibility. He told me a tale he had used to entertain anti-busing audiences in the seventies. "I met Tom Winship"—then the editor of the *Globe*—"and I said, 'You really know about urban problems.' He said, 'I have an urban team.' I asked, 'How do I get in touch with them?' He said, 'Dial the number of the *Globe*. After five o'clock, dial "1" and the number in Wellesley.' "

Behind the scenes, Bulger worked to keep the level of violence in South Boston as low as possible. "The place is full of I.R.A. sympathizers," David Wilson, the former *Globe* columnist, pointed out. "Bill Bulger was one of the people who helped prevent a bloody holocaust." In public, Bulger served the anti-busing cause by addressing numerous anti-busing rallies. His great coup, however, was not a speech he gave but a speech he helped arrange. In March, 1976, he took James Coleman, the sociologist whose 1966 report to Congress, "Equality of Educational Opportunity," had provided much of the impetus for busing, on a tour of South Boston High, and then brought him to the State House to deliver an evaluation of busing in Boston so far. "In large cities, with available suburbs," Coleman said,



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"school desegregation—in particular, compulsory racial balance—has proved disastrous to social integration, by greatly accelerating the loss of whites from the cities, and leading to racially divided metropolitan areas, with a black central city and white suburbs."

"The last time I saw John Andrews School," Bulger told me, "there were marshals with sap gloves, batons, visors on their helmets going in and out. They used it as a headquarters. Then they closed it. I had gone there in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade."

I asked him if he had any regrets about his part in the busing controversy.

"I wish I could have made the case clearer," he said. "Argued it more successfully."

It is widely believed that Bulger's role in the busing fight—as a defender of his home, in the view of his neighborhood, or as a front man for Neanderthals, in the view of liberals outside the neighborhood—froze him to his constituency. He might advance within the Senate, but he could never run citywide or statewide. Another anti-busing South Boston politician, however, managed to broaden his base. As a state representative, Raymond Flynn was every bit as opposed to busing as Bulger. "The sacred principles on which this nation was founded," Flynn was capable of orating in the seventies, "are threatened by a new tyranny . . . dressed in judicial robes." But by 1984 Flynn was mayor of Boston, the first South Boston resident to reach City Hall. When Flynn ran for reëlection in 1987, he carried Boston's black neighborhoods resoundingly.

Part of the difference is that Flynn came to speak of busing as a great trauma that Boston wanted to move beyond, while Bulger continued to think of it as a wrong to South Boston that should never have been committed. Two years into his first term, Mayor Flynn said, "Everybody wants to open a new chapter of good will for the city," which was boilerplate, but boilerplate can be good politics. Bulger, by contrast, liked the speech he gave in Dorchester Heights in 1975 so well that he quoted it in 1990 in a speech on public housing. He was unwilling to fudge his past position, or to devise new positions or a new image that would supersede it. "There is a series of inhibitions in Bill which prevents him from being a political animal," a fellow-politician said to me. "He does not crave public acceptance, as a real politician must." "What is Flynn/Bulger?" another Bulger-watcher said. "It's Bulger looking at Flynn and saying, 'You forgot your base,' and Flynn looking at Bulger and saying, 'You never grew.' " Still a third Bulger-watcher said, "Flynn is a modern politician, and Bulger is not. I don't think a day goes by when Bulger doesn't mull that over, or at least a week."

The busing fight froze Bulger's relationship with the press. His attitude toward the Boston media shifted from aloofness to distrust and disdain, and he assumed, often with reason, that the shift was mutual. He rationalized his dislike by deciding that the press was insatiable as well as untrustworthy—that once a politician started worrying about his image, he became the prisoner of it, and of the image-makers. (Of course, determining not to have an image could make him a prisoner of his own determination.) Bulger's new attitude hurt him as much as it annoyed the press, for by shutting himself off from journalists as a class he foreclosed the option of wooing them individually, and that was something he was certainly capable of doing. One of the people I discussed the press issue with was Patricia McGovern, the chairwoman of the State Senate Ways and Means Committee. She agreed that it was "one of the defining questions" concerning Bulger. "He's smart enough to know that things would be easier for him if he made certain accommodations with the press," she said. "He chooses not to make those accommodations. What does that say about him?"

When Bulger and I had finished breakfast, I accompanied him to the State House. The swan boats were not yet out for the spring, but the Public Garden and the Common were filled with Northeastern urban bird life: ducks, pigeons, and gulls. As we drew nearer to Bulger's office, his spirits rose, and he let fall scattered but related bits of an imaginary dialogue between him and his tormentors. "When I became Senate President in 1978, the papers said, 'Now he'll emerge from his co-

coon.' I thought, We'll see about that. . . . They said, 'We don't know what he thinks.' I thought, What business is it of theirs what I think? . . . They say, 'He must have a dark side.' Well, I think of sin. Who doesn't have a dark side?"

By the time we reached the State House, with its bloated golden dome, Bulger's step was brisk. A young guard seated at a desk was looking over the *Globe* without verbs. "Don't believe what you read," Bulger told him brightly.

"I only read the sports and 'The Far Side,'" the guard answered.

"That's the spirit," the Senate President said.

THE busing crisis, which fixed Bulger's image of the world and the world's image of Bulger, had an air of inevitability about it. Something like it was bound to happen to a man of his background, temperament, and principles. The turning point in Bulger's career as an officeholder, however, was accidental. In February, 1977, the No. 2 man in the State Senate Democratic leadership, Senate Majority Leader Joseph DiCarlo, was convicted, with another senator, of extorting forty thousand dollars from a New York construction-consulting firm, which had supervised the building of the University of Massachusetts' Boston campus. In 1978, the No. 1 man, Senate President Kevin Harrington, resigned after it turned out that he had once accepted a two-thousand-dollar contribution from the same firm. Before the scandals came to light, Bulger, the loner from Southie who thought that busing was unnatural and reporters were rogues, had as much chance of becoming President of the Senate as Gerald Ford had in 1973 of becoming President of the United States. But once the scandals had unfolded he, like Ford, was the only one left standing.

A key to Bulger's success as a leader during the next thirteen years has been a willingness to let his colleagues have their way on most issues. Political success is commonly defined as the accomplishment of agendas, especially for executive-branch politicians; incoming Presidents, governors, even mayors, speak of "hitting the ground running," and journalists write of "honeymoons" and "hundred days" in which those officials' agendas are set in place. For a legislative leader, however, success depends on lacking an extensive agenda. Speakers and majority leaders are there to make the wheels turn, and if they want too much for themselves they are distracted. "Bulger relies on his committee chairmen in a way not understood outside the Senate," Senator McGovern said. "If in the end the Senate wants something, the Senate will speak, and the Senate will have it."

A friend outside the Legislature said, "Since he doesn't have a political philosophy on a broad range of issues, he lets the process take its course."

When Bulger has wanted something, he has preferred not to show it. This has prevented him from exposing himself to possible rebuke, and has kept everyone guessing about his intentions. On rare occasions when he has wanted something openly, he has generally got it. Most of the items on his short list of wants have happened to be things that liberals also wanted. Bulger's friends can tick off the list of his pet programs with an angry defen-

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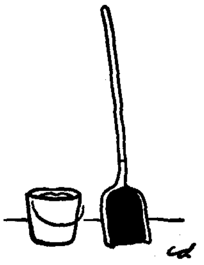
siveness, directed at liberals who fail to see how much he has done for them. "He is responsible for harbor cleanup in Boston," one fan of his told me, reciting the catalogue. "He is the reason public-housing subsidies survived in Massachusetts. He is the reason the state has a library system worth talking about, because he has the common sense to know that if a kid can read and you give him a book he'll learn."

Always before Bulger's eyes, as a lifelong concern larger than any project, has been the image of the urban lower class—not abstract, but personalized. One of the few times he has shown public distress—which for him means distress that is visible in the public rooms of the State House—came during a shutdown of the Boston-area public-transit system in December, 1980. The trains stopped running because the House and the Senate had deadlocked over the question of how to make up a forty-one-million-dollar deficit in the budget of the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority. "Everyone in the Legislature was up all night, and he was absolutely heartsick," a former aide recalls. "He bemoaned the fact that he was hurting Mrs. Kelly"—Jane Doe from Southie—"who had to take the subway to earn five dollars an hour, and who could lose that job in the middle of the Christmas rush. He was forcing on her the worst thing she could experience, and he had come into politics to help the Mrs. Kellys." Bulger ended up compromising with the House.



Bulger has also helped the Mr. Kellys whenever it has been a question of a job for a deserving acquaintance. He would never say that he had come into politics to perform such services, yet he has seemed to do them with regularity. Considering the flak he gets from non-acquaintances, it's a wonder that he has persisted in the practice. Paul Mahoney was only one example of a Bulger associate's going on to higher things and getting hammered for it. The all-time favorite target has been Francis X. Joyce, a former Bulger aide who became the executive director of the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority in 1982. The authority, which is responsible for developing and operating a modern convention center in Boston, has been plagued by ballooning cost projections, and those have made it and Joyce easy marks. "Bulger's critics keep attacking the convention center because it's his," the fan with the catalogue argued. "Except, could somebody tell me what he's got out of it? It doesn't employ half of South Boston." For employing half of South Boston, Bulger has relied on the traditional resource of the transit system. "Public transportation in Boston is practically a wholly owned subsidiary of Bill Bulger's," the former lobbyist Paul McDevitt said. "But so what? The trains run. He'd be a fool not to reward the people who support him, and nobody's ever called him a fool."

To get what he has wanted out of the Senate, Bulger has had to keep it in line. Even to get what the Senate has wanted out of the Senate in a smooth and timely fashion has required discipline and the exercise of authority. Bulger has had other ways of maintaining control than by twisting arms. The charm he has refused to waste on the press has been spent on the Senate instead. "I've seen him working the phones, romancing senators, doling out honey," one eyewitness says. "They'd be willing to eat out of a dog dish." He has also overpowered colleagues intellectually. "When you go into his office thinking you know an issue and he doesn't, he can cut you off from your own argument," the former aide said. "Now, when that happens you can't stand up and tell the world he's outargued you, so you say he threatened to take away your committee chairmanship."

Nevertheless, moments have come when arms have had to be twisted. Bostonians point to Bulger's presumed victims with all the solemnity of Themistocles' father pointing to old galleys. In 1978, John Powers, the clerk of the Supreme Judicial Court, struck the name of Whitey Bulger, who was on leave from his courthouse janitor's job, off the payroll. Four years later, Powers found that his salary had been frozen. In 1980, Bulger promised Sonny McDonough, a member of the Governor's Council who was dying of cancer, that his son would get a Housing Court clerkship. Bulger believed that the job was lined up for the following year. But in 1981 E. George Daher, the chief judge of the Housing

Court, awarded the clerkship to someone else. That fall, the state budget stuck Daher with a pay cut. When the *Globe* asked Bulger about Powers and Daher, in 1988, he said, "I wouldn't punish anyone." Indeed, he wouldn't need to, for a Senate President who has instilled the proper degree of respect in those he deals with is in the position of Colonel Aureliano Buendía, the rebel leader in "One Hundred Years of Solitude," who found that his orders "were being carried out even before they were given, even before he thought of them." (When I tried that quotation out on Bulger, he laughed as if it were a new idea.)

As his Senate Presidency went on, Bulger acquired a new set of enemies, in addition to those who had fought for busing. These were the people for whom patronage and back-room power are anathema, for whom power itself, perhaps, is anathema. In another era, Theodore Roosevelt called them "goo-goos"; Judy Meredith has called them "process liberals." Meredith remembers sitting beside a lobbyist for the Massachusetts Civil Liberties Union during a Senate session in the late seventies, when Bulger was gavelling down an attempt to repeal Massachusetts' prison-furlough program. "I wish it would come up for a vote," the lobbyist said, "to make people accountable." Meredith pointed out that if it did come up for a vote it would lose. "I just hate to be obligated to his gavelling," the lobbyist said.

One thing that none of Bulger's enemies had ever hung on him was a charge of corruption. Honesty was as much a part of the package as the trim suits and the Plutarch. He had reached the Presidency because he was the cleanest high-ranking member of the Senate. In December of 1988, however, a charge of corruption was finally made. Like the scandals that had felled Bulger's predecessors in the late seventies, it involved construction. In 1983, Harold Brown, one of Massachusetts' wealthiest landlords, submitted a development proposal for a skyscraper at 75 State Street, in the heart of the downtown business district. In 1985, Brown paid five hundred thousand dollars to a lawyer, Thomas Finnerty, allegedly for his help in securing the necessary permissions from the city government. In 1987, Finnerty sued Brown, claiming that Brown had reneged on an agreement to pay him as much as one and a third million more. (That is a lot for a lawyer, but the State Street project was worth a lot more—two hundred and eighty-six million dollars.) Brown countersued, claiming that the five hundred thousand dollars he had already paid Finnerty had been extorted. What made this charge of extortion interesting was that a childhood friend and former law partner of Finnerty's happened to be Bill Bulger. What made it more interesting was that within three months of being paid by Brown, Finnerty had written two checks to Bulger, totalling two hundred and forty thousand dollars.

Bulger said that he had nothing to do with 75 State Street; that the money from Finnerty was a loan to him, in anticipation of a legal fee he expected to receive in 1986; and that as soon as he found out that the ultimate source of the money was Brown he had paid Finnerty back with interest. (Bulger wrote two checks to Finnerty, totalling $254,320, by the end of 1985.)

Brown was no lamb—in 1986 he

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"I suggest that in future you eat all your lunch."

had pleaded guilty and received a suspended sentence for bribing a city building-department official—but his suggestions of an extortion linked to Bulger were too good to be discounted simply because he was a felon, and on December 8, 1988, the *Globe* broke the story on page 1. Next to this, the two-thousand-dollar campaign contribution that had demolished Harrington, and even the forty-thousand-dollar shakedown that had sunk DiCarlo, was small potatoes. Bulger's enemies were exultant.

The story slowed down a bit on December 29th, when Brown and Finnerty settled out of court. Brown paid Finnerty an additional two hundred thousand dollars, and that didn't seem like the act of someone who had been subject to extortion. "I am a businessman," Brown explained, "and it is not my job to pursue investigations." That left the federal government, which had, in fact, been investigating 75 State Street for two and a half years: on January 31, 1989, the Justice Department asked Jeremiah O'Sullivan, the interim United States Attorney, to review the case. On March 31st, O'Sullivan issued a statement of his conclusions, saying, "The evidence as to Mr. Finnerty simply does not support a federal indictment. Further, no witness has even alleged that State Senator Bulger was criminally involved in this matter through his relationship with Mr. Finnerty, and any inferences that he was so involved are not supported by the weight of the evidence." At a news conference, O'Sullivan added, "It was not a close call. It was a clear call." He also observed that "power brokering is not necessarily a federal crime."

It may have been a clear call for O'Sullivan, but Bulger was not in the clear as far as his reputation was concerned. In the spring of 1989, a *Globe*/WBZ-TV poll found that seventy-two per cent of the respondents who were aware of 75 State Street thought that Bulger had used his position for personal gain. "According to the poll's geographic breakdown, Bulger is most unpopular in Boston," the *Globe* added primly. "In Suffolk County, which is primarily made up of the city of Boston, Bulger has a 51 percent unfavorable rating and a 20 percent favorable mark." For the *Globe* to do a poll on the public's perception of Bulger in the wake of 75 State Street was a little like assigning an arsonist to cover a fire. But the poll's results undoubtedly reflected the reality. It was not lost on Bulger. "During State Street," a friend recalls, "I got a sense of a tremendously lonely person."

BULGER'S *strategy for coping with* loneliness was to hijack the 1990 Democratic gubernatorial nomination for John Silber. Bulger had worked with Silber on several occasions during the eighties, and had helped Boston University acquire the site of the Commonwealth Armory for campus expansion in 1982. Silber cemented the relationship by extending a B.U. scholarship program to graduates of Boston's parochial schools, a sure Bulger-pleaser. Though the politics of the two men were similar, their styles could not have been more different. Bulger conducted himself more like a former philosophy professor than Silber did, while Silber behaved like a barroom philosopher. He had never run for public office before, and he campaigned as if he hadn't.

The end of Michael Dukakis's last term as governor, which coincided with a regional recession, made the voters receptive to an outsider, and no Democrat was more of an outsider than Silber. But before Silber could be listed on the primary ballot, in September, he needed to win at least fifteen per cent of the vote of the state Party convention in June—the ultimate insider's hurdle. Bulger persuaded enough delegates who were attending the convention as representatives of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. to vote for Silber on the first ballot, squeezing him over the threshold. In September, Silber won the primary, with fifty-one per cent of the vote.

Republican-primary voters also chose a first-time candidate, however—former United States Assistant Attorney General William Weld. And Republican senatorial candidates challenging Democratic incumbents made Bulger, who was a sixteen-time candidate, an issue in their campaigns. One Republican ad displayed head shots of Bulger and Leonid Brezhnev. "He used to run a one-party dictatorship" was the caption under Brezhnev's picture. "He still does" was the caption under Bulger's. On Election Day, Bulger beat his challenger, the Republican veterinarian, handily, but Weld edged Silber by seventy-six thousand votes, out of more than two million cast, and

Republicans also picked up seven seats in the Senate, for a total of sixteen senators out of forty—enough to sustain Weld's vetoes. Senate Minority Leader David Locke, the only man who had been in the Senate longer than Bulger, compared him with General Custer at Little Big Horn, saying, "He's the only one standing as he looks at the bodies of his comrades."

In the event, Bulger made out better than Custer. Weld had been elected on a program of no new taxes, and Bulger was content to let him have his way. All spring, Bulger lay in the weeds while the House struggled to make the cuts necessary to put together a budget. On one especially tough issue, cutting state aid to localities, the House took a voice vote, allowing state representatives to do the right thing without incurring individual responsibility. "I could hear Bulger smirking all the way across town when that happened," one observer said. "All of a sudden, they found his techniques useful when it was something important to them." When the budget came to the Senate, in the middle of June, it passed in a twenty-five-and-a-half-hour session. Bulger kept the Senate moving with the dispatch of a threshing machine. When the process was over, objects of Bulger's affection were found among the wheat, while sources of annoyance to him were found among the chaff. The Democrats resisted a Republican attempt to provide business tax credits. (It would not do to go back to Southie and say that businessmen would be paying fewer taxes, while Mrs. Kelly would be getting fewer services.) The Senate restored money for the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and for subsidies to low-income housing. The budgets of the Ethics Commission and the Office of Campaign and Political Finance were cut (revenge on the goo-goos). The Convention Center was given access to revenues from the hotel-motel tax. "Bulger has not changed his M.O. one iota," the observer told me.

I spent a morning with Bulger in the State House as these maneuvers were coming to a conclusion. The Senate chamber, which is his formal arena, is an octagonal, high-ceilinged room with nine busts of famous patriots set in niches in pale-blue walls. Five of the busts are draped in togas, and the four others wear collars and buttons of the eighteenth or nineteenth century—a jarring effect, for it makes

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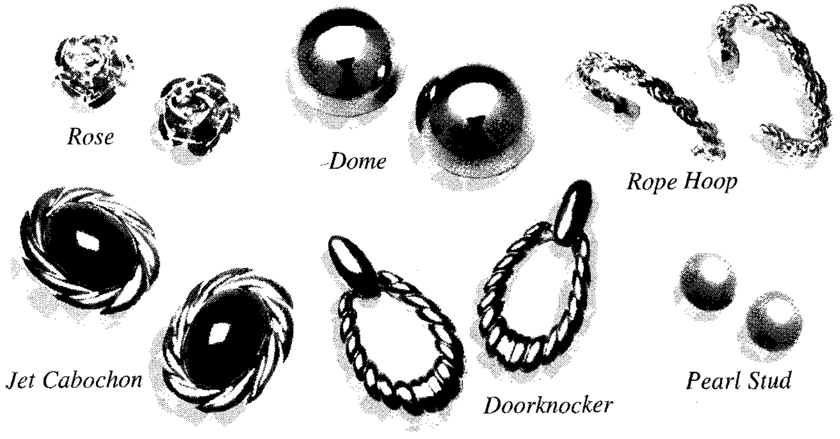

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the figures in togas seem to be actual Romans. The bust of Benjamin Franklin was sculptured to a larger scale than the others, and so looks macrocephalic. Bulger presides from a high-backed chair beneath a gaudy clock and an eagle with a ribbon in its beak which is inscribed "God Save the Commonwealth of Massachusetts." The ceiling is decorated with allegorical medallions, the color of Wedgwood plates, depicting the arts of peace and war. The acoustics are awful, which must be why the clerk of the Senate doesn't bother to use any tone of voice other than a drone. Generally speaking, the only senators who make an impression are Bulger and Locke, who have been playing this room for a total of nearly forty-four years.

Bulger conducts his most serious business in his office. It is there that he doles out honey, and considers twisting arms. Bulger's predecessor had carpeted the Senate President's office in royal blue. Bulger restored it to its nineteenth-century appearance, at a cost of a hundred and sixty thousand dollars, plus sniping. ("Why did he take abuse over the office?" another observer asked. "Because he wanted to curry favor with some Wasps on the Massachusetts Historical Commission? He did it because he wanted it to be right, and because he wanted to leave it behind.") Now the color scheme is a sober olive and brown. The office is much larger than a study carrel in a Jesuit law library, but it still doesn't look lived-in. The only personal memento that is not on or immediately behind Bulger's desk is a framed letter from John McCormack, which stands on a side table beside the fireplace. The walls are hung with portraits of past Senate Presidents, a stern lot. Only Calvin Coolidge is now recognizable.

a. ehrenberg

Bulger came into his office latish the morning I was there (he had been up until four o'clock, following the negotiations of the House-Senate conference committee on the budget), and he talked about his political strategy during the Republicans' first half year of semi-power. He seemed, on the whole, to enjoy letting Weld be the point man of retrenchment. "When the Governor won, the question became 'Now what do we do if we want to make things work?'" he said. "We could have fought every inch of the way on each budget cut, but it would have been futile. My argument around here has been that, as Democrats, we didn't have the votes. He would have vetoed, to prove he was holding the pass of Thermopylae against these tax-and-spend people." He carefully banished any hint of threat from his voice, and assumed his best bland manner. "Now we're going to see what the effects of his policy are. Only when the people see the effects will they ask us to take a different course." He became philosophical. "You can't in conscience be doctrinaire about anything. What we're doing needs to be done from time to time."

The press, with which he is linked as if by a bad marriage, came up. He produced a clip from the *Globe* in which he had been called "increasingly a captive of Southie." "Oh!" he mocked. "Isn't that the worst kind of thing? He represents his constituents. Of all the constituencies in North America, only this one shouldn't be represented. For many of us over our way"—he stopped, and smiled to hear himself zooming into overdrive—"the media's efforts to kill are viewed as a tribute to your integrity." He decided to treat the subject with humor. "You know that water cooler by the press gallery in the Senate chamber? I have ideas for that water cooler. When a court officer is waving people back from it, and only the press is drinking—stay away. I took the water cooler out one hot summer," he recalled with satisfaction. "They called me Catiline, or some such thing."

I threw the beanball question: What were the factors that had caused Whitey Bulger, raised in the same family as Bill, to turn out the way he had?

Bulger paused the longest he ever had in all the times we'd spoken. "First of all, we all have free will," he said. "We're accountable in some fashion for what we do." He paused yet longer. There was no second of all.

But he came back to the question obliquely, by way of remembering a black woman who had worked in the State House and had once told him that the reason white people built jails was to keep blacks out of the labor force. "There was something almost ludicrous about it," Bulger said. "But I kinda knew what she was saying. She was sitting someplace where she identified with all the people getting banged around, while we seemed comfortable and undisturbed. She was saying, 'I begrudge anyone the right to feel he has cornered the market on virtue.' It's more true to say that we are all very imperfect. There's something wrong with human nature. No one of us should be too sure of himself, and sometimes you think you're coming up against that in people who seem to be in a better position. We're all deficient."

We adjourned to the Senate chamber for a meandering session. The conference committee was delayed in its labors, and the Senate marked time until it should have something significant to discuss. Minor bills were raced through first and second readings. Bulger complimented one senator on his "clear exposition," and added, "Twice I detected a subject and a predicate in the same sentence."

"It beats heavy lifting," he told me after the Senate adjourned. "Actually, you need to keep track of these details. If you don't, you won't know what's happening, and you'll be too proud to ask."

I asked him the easiest way to get to the Mary Ellen McCormack Project, and he offered to give me a lift. An aide drove, and we cruised along the project's streets, speckled with the shade of trees that were now tall. Bulger and a woman walking along recognized each other and waved. "Mrs. Adams," he said. "She was here when I was here." We drove out to the Point—a distance of less than two miles, but long enough for a life—and bought some hot dogs at Castle Island, a nineteenth-century fort that is now neither an island nor a fort but a park. The walk from East Third Street to the fort and back is Bulger's morning exercise. Being there at midday in June felt like wearing a heating pad. When Bulger spotted people he knew he greeted them with ease and charm. When strangers hailed him, he greeted them with a slight hesitation, overcome but still evident. The last politician I had seen with such unpolitical body language, curiously enough, was Elliott Richardson.

Bulger can keep his Senate seat, in all probability, until doomsday. The question is what it will be worth. If he is right in assuming that the Re-

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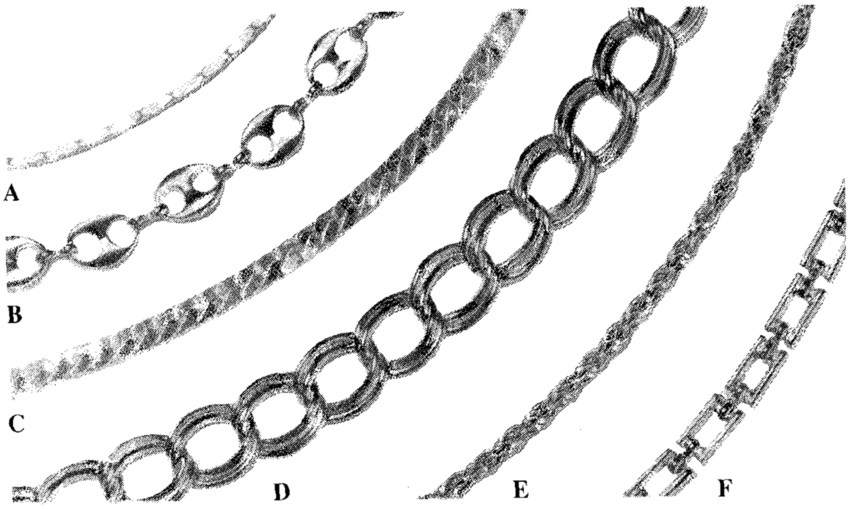

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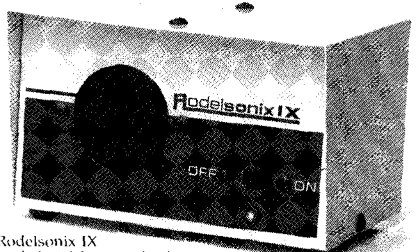

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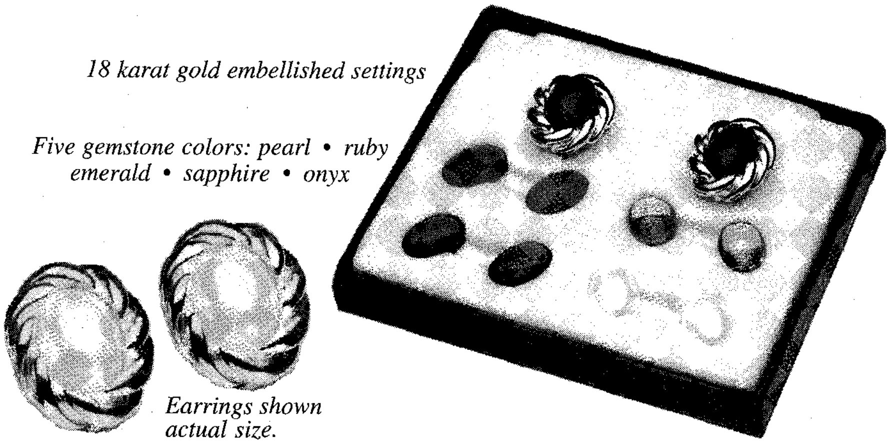

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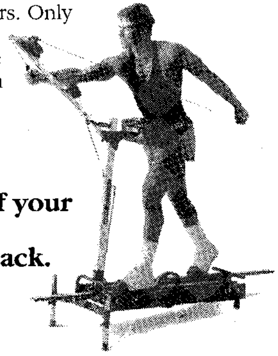

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publican policy of cutting spending and holding the line on taxes will become unpopular, he may find himself at the head of a veto-proof Senate majority. If he is wrong, and Democratic strength continues to erode, he could slip to Minority Leader or—what is more likely, assuming Democratic anger at such a change of fortune—simply a senator. In that case, he would have to recalculate the ambivalent attractions of political power, which he treasures when it benefits his district, his supporters, his handful of causes; when it does not, he loathes it with an almost anarchistic passion.

He showed me other sights of South Boston, mostly schools and churches. On Broadway, we passed a memorial in a small park. "The Vietnam War Memorial," he said. "First in the country, wasn't it?" South Boston High School sat, closed for the summer, on a hill with a view of the bay. "I remember marching down Broadway and looking up G Street in 1974. There facing us was a phalanx of Boston policemen, with their batons, and this poor devil of a police commissioner in the middle." We drove down the hill and headed back downtown. "People shouldn't wear uniforms too long," he said. "It does something to them. Like this guy Schwarzkopf."

ONE month later, in the last week of July, a South Boston man collected a jackpot of fourteen million three hundred thousand dollars in Mass Millions, the Massachusetts state lottery. He split his winnings with three acquaintances, one of whom was Whitey Bulger. Whitey's share amounted to more than eighty-nine thousand dollars a year after taxes for twenty years.

I called the Senate President to ask if he had ever bought a lottery ticket. "I bought one once, just to prove that I was not the kind of person who never buys one," he said. "Though after this, who knows?"

—RICHARD BROOKHISER

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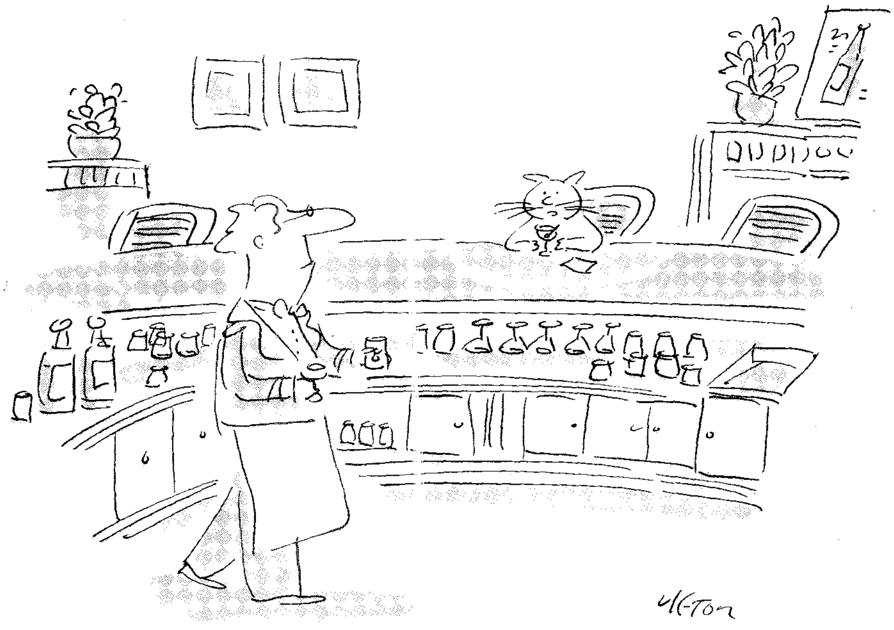
Adoption

THE first act of Jane Anderson's lovely, touching play "The Baby Dance," at the Lucille Lortel, is set in a trailer, at a trailer park in Louisiana, in steaming heat and to the accompaniment of country music. Its heroine, Wanda (Linda Purl), very pregnant in short shorts, and her husband, a workingman named Al (Richard Lineback), are waiting for Rachel (Stephanie Zimbalist), a well-to-do woman, and she enters with an air of excitement and with a gift-wrapped box. I mention the three leading actors right off because they are a marvellous trio. Rachel has come to check on the progress of Wanda's pregnancy; she has contracted to adopt the baby. She asks about some money that she gave Wanda and Al for an air-conditioner, but part of the money has been eaten away, according to Al, for other necessities. The slow drawls of Wanda and Al sound stupid in contrast with the bright, worldly speech of Rachel. Wanda asks if Rachel and her husband are churchgoers. Well, no, but they are both spiritual types. Her husband is Jewish, and they live in Southern California. Snapshots are forthcoming of grounds and swimming pool; Wanda is excited, Al not so much. The gift is a flowered maternity dress and slip; Wanda enraptured, Al unimpressed. There are more hassles about money. All this is very jokey—on the surface, at least. The second act is set in a hospital. Rachel is on hand with her husband and a lawyer. She goes into the delivery room, and comes back happy but with news of a birth defect. She wants the child anyway, but her husband and the lawyer intervene. The deal is off. The husband gives Al some money for new tires, and the couple go off to seek a new baby. We end with Wanda and Al together in anguish.

The remarkable shift in the play is in the sensibility of the audience, as we slowly come to realize that all the delicacy and depth of feeling are Wanda's and Al's. What is a disappointment for Rachel is for them a tragedy. The play, though apparently simple, has rare narrative firmness and intelligence. Every moment is convincing, and Miss Anderson is as lucky as she is proficient: Miss Purl and Miss Zimbalist are leading players in television, with considerable theatre experience, and they shine onstage; Mr. Lineback, tall and bony, could be a young Henry Fonda. (What higher praise?) The play, with this company—and it is indeed a company, under Jenny Sullivan's direction—has already been done at Williamstown and at the Long Wharf, in New Haven. Hugh Landwehr's settings, as lighted by Kirk Bookman, are eloquent, and David Murin's costumes look exactly right. —EDITH OLIVER



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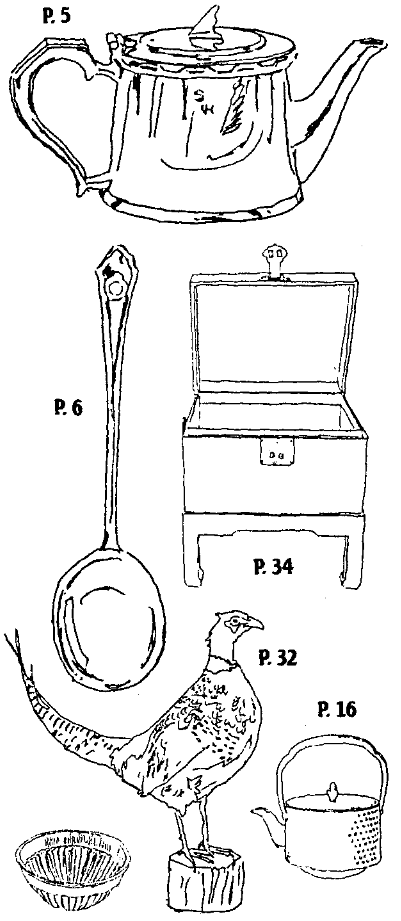

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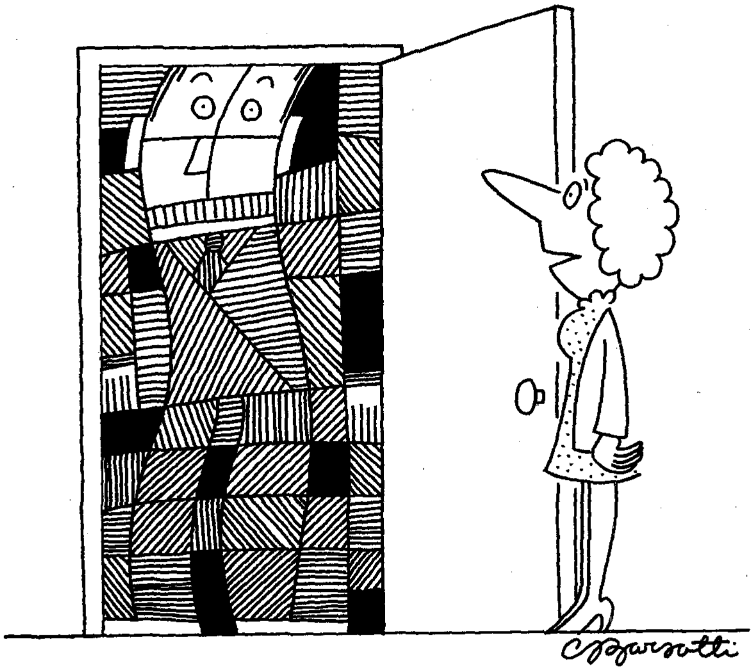
Something About a Soldier

Bernd Alois Zimmermann's "Die Soldaten" was an exciting opera when it appeared, in Cologne in 1965, and it wears well. The composer described his task as having been "to concentrate and intellectually coördinate the new discoveries of recent years" in such a way that "architecture, sculpture, painting, musical theatre, spoken theatre, ballet, film, microphone, television, tape, and sound techniques, electronic music, concrete music, circus, the musical, and all forms of motion theatre combine to form the phenomenon of pluralistic opera." In some scenes "I have employed speech, singing, screaming, whispering, jazz, Gregorian chant." A café scene in Act II is accompanied by a percussion toccata as soloists and choristers tinkle cups and clink glasses (some full, some empty), slap down cards, chatter, and cheer in strictly notated rhythms, and three tap-dancing ensigns (each with his own metre) rap out a "polyphonic" rondo in praise of military life. In a scene of Act IV, many different events are presented in a swirl of simultaneity, in several settings and on three film screens. The orchestra is large: the strings divide into fifty-four independent parts, and a note in the score concedes that it may be necessary to station the huge percussion section, along with the piano, the harpsichord, and the celesta, in another room and bring their sounds to the theatre through loudspeakers. Only two scenes, however, the two mentioned, call for a crowd; the others are intimate—generally conversations between two or three people. The opera is charged, terse—fifteen scenes, four acts, in only about a hundred and ten minutes of music—and yet there are some extensive musical developments. Act III ends with a long trio—longer than the "Rosenkavalier" trio, to which it pays homage—for the Countess, Marie, and her sister. Zimmermann unleashes the full force of his orchestra in preludes and interludes but accompanies the conversations with chamber music of delicate, inventive beauty—in ever-shifting textures, often colored by guitar or harp—which allows almost all the words to be heard.

The Cologne performance was recorded. Several German companies—Cassel, Munich, Düsseldorf, Nuremberg, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Stuttgart—took up the work and took their productions of it to other European countries. "Die Soldaten" was hailed as the most important of German operas since those of Berg. The American première was given by Sarah Caldwell, in Boston, nine years ago—an underprepared, approximate, but spirited and visionary performance. A new recording has now appeared, on Teldec, with a German and American cast, and it provides an exciting account of the score, conducted by Bernhard Kontarsky, who has worked with "Die Soldaten" since its première and has conducted Stuttgart and Vienna productions. The recording, based on the Stuttgart production but made in the studio of the South German Radio, combines score-in-hand, studio-attainable accuracy (or near-accuracy, in this work) of notes and balance with the dramatic expressiveness inspired by theatre performances. Nancy Shade is Marie, the protagonist; Milagro Vargas is her sister; Grace Hoffman (last heard at the Met in 1971) sings Marie's grandmother.

This month, the New York City Opera staged "Die Soldaten," with an even better cast. It includes a Marie, Lisa Saffer, who is sweet, true, and communicative in Zimmermann's very high tessitura, where other sopranos become squeaky or shrill, and an escalade of high tenors who can take high D's in their stride. (The collective term is suggested by the grace and prowess on the heights of Léon Escalaïs, a turn-of-the-century singer well known to record collectors.) The score specifies one *hoher Tenor*, one *sehr hoher lyrischer Tenor*, four *sehr hohe Tenöre*, and a *Heldenbariton* whose role is in the Othello-Siegfried range. Here they are John Fowler; Michael Rees Davis; Thomas Young, James Russell, Bradley Williams, and Gregory Hopkins; and David Rampy. Christopher Keene's conducting is passionate and persuasive. The distant stationing of the percussion, etc., is practiced, and the sound system is acceptable. But the staging, by Rhoda Levine, is blunt.



"You're home now, dear—relax, and we'll get you all sorted out."

Zimmermann drew his libretto from the play of the same title by J. M. R. Lenz. (Mozart could have set it: it was published in 1776, the year after "La Finta Giardiniera.") Marie, a merchant's pretty daughter, is flattered by the attentions of Desportes, a titled officer, and breaks with her fiancé, the draper Stolzius. Her father, scenting a fine match for his child, assumes Desportes's debts, and is ruined. In Desportes's absence, his friend Captain Mary spends time with Marie, and yet another officer, a young Count, falls in love with her and hopes to marry her. The Count's kindly mother visits the girl, explains to her that such a marriage would never do, and undertakes to restore her good name: "Come and live with me. Your reputation has suffered a severe blow, and this is the only way to restore it. Be my companion, and resolve to shun male company for a year." But Marie runs away from the Countess's house and goes in search of Desportes; he arranges for her to be met by his gamekeeper, "a sturdy, lusty fellow," who has his permission to rape her. Meanwhile, Stolzius, planning revenge on the man who ruined his bride, has enlisted; he seizes an opportunity while serving Desportes to put rat poison in his soup, and also poisons himself. In the penultimate scene, Marie, cold and hungry, again a fugitive, begs alms from a man who at first repulses her but then takes pity on her—and father and daughter recognize one another. In the final scene (which Lenz thought could perhaps be omitted, and which Zimmermann did omit), Desportes's colonel and the Countess discuss ways of helping the unhappy pair. She weeps for "the finest, most lovable creature"; he suggests that such tragedies could be averted if the king were to establish training schools for military paramours. To the Countess's doubts whether honorable women would enroll, he replies that the king "would have to do his best to make the profession brilliant and respectable. . . . He would save recruiting expenses, and the children would belong to him."

Lenz's intentions were not ironic. He was not opposed to soldiery, and he told his mentor Herder that he was no advocate of military matrimony, which would lessen efficiency: "Soldiers cannot and should not be gentle; that is why they are soldiers. Homer's Hector was right: had the Greeks had women with them they would never have conquered Troy." But he deplored and had compassion for the damage that a celibate profession could cause, and also told Herder that his play was "in the strictest sense a true story, experienced and prophesied in the innermost recesses of my soul." It was based, he said, on the plight of a young woman he knew, who was "living in the sweet expectation of seeing her betrothed, an officer, return faithfully to her," and "whether he does or whether he deceives her is in the lap of the gods." Desportes and Mary were apparently based on his military friends the Kleist brothers. William Yuill, in an introduction to his translations of Lenz's earlier play "The Tutor" (a wry tragicomedy involving an amorous intellectual's self-

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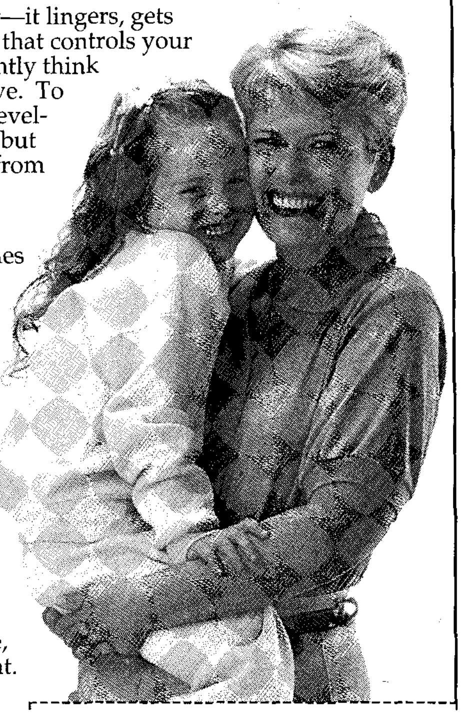

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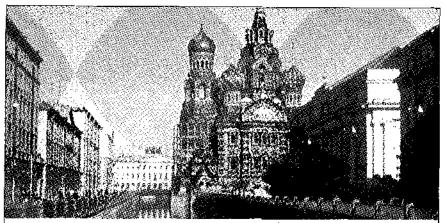

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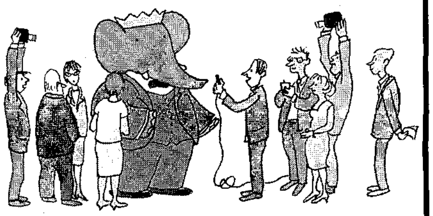

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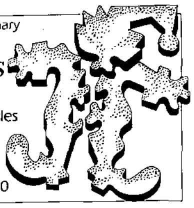


castration) and "The Soldiers," concludes:

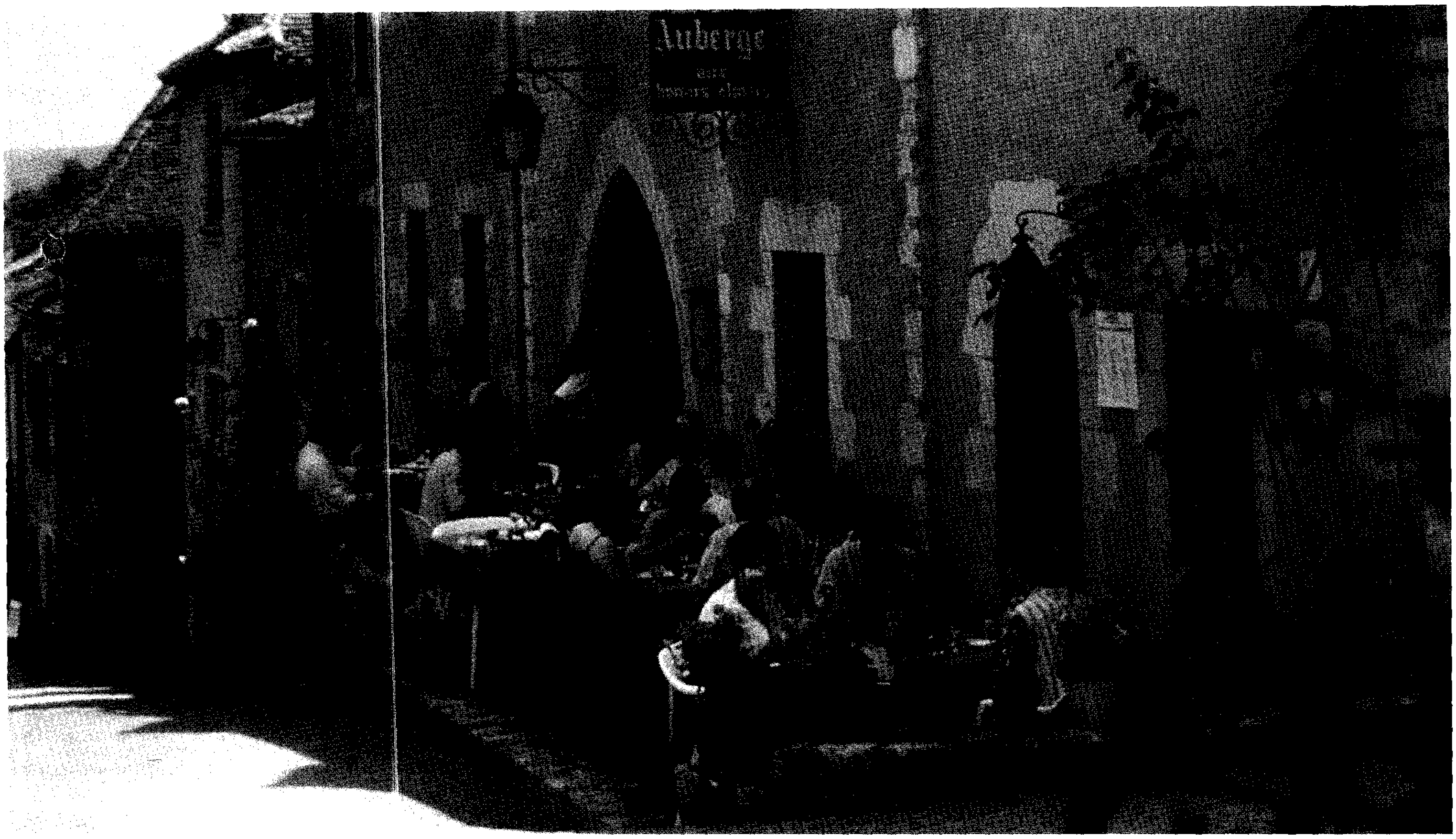
> It would be unjust . . . to regard "The Tutor" and "The Soldiers" as merely period pieces: in both plays Lenz has reproduced states of mind and motives that demonstrate convincingly the frailty of human resolve and the power of passion to overthrow reason. The very fact that the reforms he proposes in the rational spirit of the Enlightenment seem totally inadequate to curb the human waywardness he describes is a tribute to the continuing relevance of his insight into the nature of men.

Brecht drastically changed "The Tutor" to invest it with contemporary applicability, and Zimmermann altered the tone of "The Soldiers." (Among other, more important changes, he cut most of—but not all—the comedy; even less comedy survives in the City Opera's stark production.) Both Lenz's subject and his dramatic technique—with cinematic short scenes and jump cuts—influenced Büchner's "Woyzeck," written about sixty years later, and Berg's opera "Wozzeck" in turn influenced the opera "Die Soldaten." Zimmermann was first drawn to Lenz's play, he said, less by any social content than by its technical aptness for the "pluralistic opera" he had in mind. Back in 1776, Lenz had counterpointed a grim song from Marie's grandmother, "A maiden young is like the dice, She lies as she is tumbled," with squeals and giggles from the room to which Marie and Desportes have retired. Zimmermann "layers" the scene further with Stolzius and his mother in conversation thirteen miles away (the action alternates between Lille and Armentières) and with musical commentary of many kinds, including the Passion chorale; Stolzius has already read a letter that we see Marie and Desportes writing. As the composer worked, his despairing, tragic vision of a world marching to destruction took over; the soldiers became a symbol of a larger brutality. In his final scene, the father does not recognize the daughter. The opera ends with a collage, visual and aural, of musique concrète, military commands in many languages, cluster chords welling from the pit, an amplified voice crying the Lord's Prayer, a fateful drum thud, the ruthless clash of marching feet. Sudden silence and darkness. A unison D, *con tutta forza*, from all the players. Marie is seen lying collapsed, while her father shuffles away. During nearly a minute of diminuendo into silence, the cloud of an atomic-bomb explosion covers all.

The City Opera production plays on a set, by John Conklin, of tables, platforms, and benches, which are moved around by soldiers. Marie is onstage throughout, and soldiers are onstage throughout, often leering at her. Wrapped corpses, in increasing numbers, hang from the flies. After a while, a placard descends scrawled with the legend (in German) "Marie is a good lay." Miss Levine is intent on ramming home Marie's downfall by the bluntest visual and physical imagery. The "swirl of simultaneity" scene I described above—involving all the characters' reactions to Marie's flight, counterpointed by (among much else) an elegant ballroom where people dance the minuet, the waltz, the twist—is replaced by a realistically explicit military gang rape of Marie, through every orifice, in every position, while the elaborate vocal ensembles, prerecorded, sound through loudspeakers. (In the earlier café scene, the Andalusian waitress who should be dancing to a group of admiring soldiers is subjected to the same treatment.) One can see what Miss Levine has in mind. What Zimmermann had in mind was something subtler and more intricate, and his music suffers. It suffers, too, from the non-stop provision of pantomime—often soldiers saluting, goose-stepping, *Heil Hitler*-ing in robotic, toy-soldier fashion—during the dramatically urgent instrumental passages, the preludes and interludes. (Can an opera audience never be trusted to *listen* intently, without need of invented visual counterpoints? Why do conductors stand for it?) Acts I and II and Acts III and IV are played without break, which saves time but blurs the composer's musical shapes. Miss Levine applies a similar system of robotic tics to "characterize" some of the principals—even Marie. In short, the City Opera has worked hard to bring an important and demanding opera to the New York stage, and musically it has succeeded better than one might have dared to hope. The staging, which has also been carefully prepared, runs smoothly but makes its points coarsely.

Puccini's "La Fanciulla del West"—the first new opera ever performed by the Met, in 1910—is a work perhaps more readily appreciated on record than in the theatre. It has a preposter-

"A world that seems to be working right for a change."



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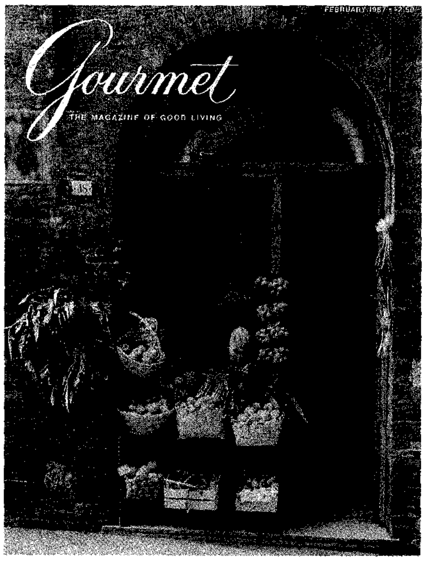

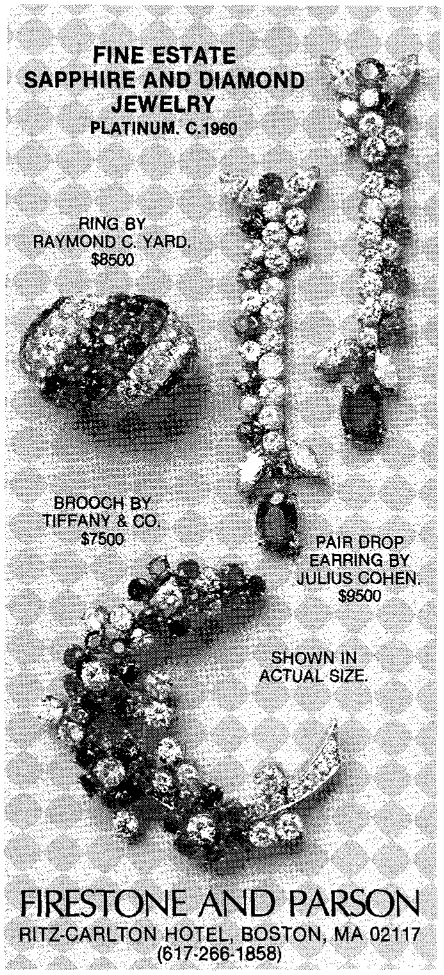

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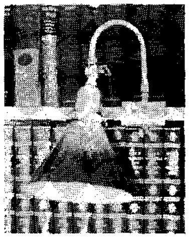

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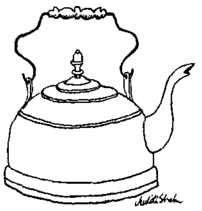
ous and sentimental libretto, but the score is finely wrought, harmonically and instrumentally adventurous. The composer himself said that "the drama can get in the way of listening to the music," and William Ashbrook observes in his Puccini monograph that "the person who listens just to voices during a performance will miss the main source of melodic interest—the orchestra." Until the tenor's "Ch'ella mi creda," near the end, "Fanciulla" does not have the sweeping Grand Tunes of Puccini's earlier operas. (I borrow the term from Edward Greenfield's perceptive little Puccini book.) Richard Aldrich in his famous *Times* review of the première wrote of

> a more or less detached and formless paragraphic, sometimes a rapid and staccato vocal utterance, projected against an equally expeditious and hastily sketched orchestral background, to which is given the task of accentuating, emphasizing, and intensifying the significance of the dialogue with broad points or broad sketches of color, thematic fragments, quickly shifting, kaleidoscopic harmonies.

Debussy and Strauss influence the score. The prelude opens with whole-tone chords and continues with a swaying white-note theme. In "Ch'ella mi creda" no accidental appears; the eleven-bar melody is given out across three low octaves; at its repeat, the first six bars are harmonized. Sometimes the bassoon has the highest note of a woodwind chord. The final chord of the opera (which an audience often drowns with its applause—another reason for preferring phonograph performance) is a soft shine of high *divisi* violins, a triad from the celesta, and a very soft bass-drum tap.



The action hardly bears scrutiny, but the scenery matters. Belasco wrote "The Girl of the Golden West," as he had written "Madame Butterfly," for Blanche Bates. Puccini, who did not know English, saw "Butterfly" (the matter of his previous opera) in London, and he saw the "Girl" on Broadway, when he was here to supervise the Met premières of "Manon Lescaut" and "Butterfly." Belasco's play opened with two elaborately lit preliminary tableaux, cued to music: the Sierras beneath the moon, with faint light twinkling in the Girl's cabin, which is reached by a winding trail; then the Polka saloon, kerosene lamps shining through its windows, nestled at the foot of the mountains with darkness all around. And it closed with a scene of sunrise on the boundless prairie—Dick, the reformed bandit, looking eastward to the future, the Girl, Minnie, looking westward to take a last farewell of her beloved California and the miners there who loved her ("Only a few days ago I clasped their hands—I saw their faces—their dear faces—! And now they are fading"), while strains of "Old Dog Tr[illegible]" steal from the quartette. Puccini and his librettists changed the ending. In a redwood-forest clearing—distant snowy peaks glitter in the morning sun—the miners are about to string up the captured Dick when Minnie rides on, hair streaming, pistol between her teeth, to stand in defiance, like a new Leonore, before the man she loves. By her eloquence she persuades her friends to yield him to her. The couple move off to their new life, leaving a crowd of miners disconsolate, weeping. (Mr. Greenfield has written of the Marschallin-like quality of their sacrifice.) Puccini counted on the grandeur of the natural setting to add a redemptive radiance to his finale, and Belasco himself directed the staging.

In a new Met production of "Fanciulla," which opened this month, the ending has been changed again. The setting is "the Hanging Place," the gray, shabby main street of a deserted mining town; it is so dark that the singers' faces cannot be seen clearly. The final tableau is allotted to Jack Rance, the sheriff, center stage in a sad pose. The director is Giancarlo del Monaco, and his designer is Michael Scott. Their change is not for the better. The production is otherwise straightforward, though the Polka saloon has awkwardly enormous dimensions, and the curtain rose on it too soon. Barbara Daniels, the Minnie, was insecure of pitch and unpleasant in the upper reaches. Sherrill Milnes's Rance was carefully studied and carefully sung. Placido Domingo, the Dick, was wonderful, with ring and vivacity in his tones and his phrasing. Leonard Slatkin conducted, making his Met début. It was plain that he appreciates the richness of the score, and there was some well-observed detail and some vivid playing. But the music did not flow easily, and enthusiasm often turned into loudness. —ANDREW PORTER

A CRITIC AT LARGE

ROCK AND COLE

THE two major composer-lyricists of Tin Pan Alley's golden age (circa 1915-55) recently celebrated centenaries. That of Irving Berlin, in 1988, a year before his death, was a sentimental occasion, marked by a gala Carnegie Hall concert but not by any serious reappraisal of his work as an artist. Cole Porter's centenary, this year, has been a *musical* occasion: above all, a reviewing of Porter's catalogue in a spate of recordings—from the first complete reading of his favorite score, that of "Nymph Errant," through new Porter recitals and reissues of classic material, to an interpretation of Porter standards by rock singers.

That Berlin's anniversary was an anniversary, while Porter's seems to have launched an era of rediscovery, is just. For Porter was a trained musician with a compellingly idiosyncratic style, while the untrained Berlin wrote a stream of immensely engaging although somewhat all-purpose hit tunes. The advice set down by Charles K. Harris, the most successful composer, lyricist, and music publisher of the eighteen-nineties, might have been Berlin's motto: "When writing popular songs, always bear in mind that it is to the masses, the untrained musical public, that you must largely look for support and popularity. Therefore, do not offer them anything which in subject matter or melody does not appeal to their ears."

The generation of songwriters that captured Broadway after the First World War effected the first of the two great revolutions in twentieth-century American music by smashing that rule. Jerome Kern, George and Ira Gershwin, Oscar Hammerstein II, Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, and Cole Porter forged an élite audience out of those masses while giving life to what had previously been a static and formulaic art. American song was imitative, rudimentary, and genre-bound; story ballads, Dixie songs, topical patter, and comic novelties built up a vast world tightly limited by the determination of composers and lyricists to do what everyone else was doing. They were less writers than re-creators. Will D. Cobb, the lyricist of "School Days," said, "It's a wise song that knows its own author."

The generation led by Kern saw popular music not as a thing in itself but as a medium through which to serve the telling of stories. These men didn't merely write songs—they wrote entire scores, and to do so they had to summon up a culture to respond to their art. When Kern hit Broadway in 1904, as a "fixer" of musicals in need of specialty numbers, the public was undemanding, because it had no idea what the potential of musical theatre was. Influential English imports, such as "The Geisha" (1896) and "Florodora" (1899), popularized a relatively integrated form of show, but one to which charm was always more fundamental than intelligence. And certainly Victor Herbert's scores developed a vocabulary for the expression of character, whether romantic or comic; for about a decade after the flash success of his extravaganza "Babes in Toyland" (1903), Herbert was, in effect, the voice of the American musical. But his lyricists were a generation behind—too often working the available models, as if all Broadway were one great School of Charles K. Harris.

The breakthrough show was Herbert's "The Only Girl" (1914), now forgotten but a huge hit in its day—a sleeper that so startled the town that it was moved from the little Thirty-ninth Street Theatre to the sizable Lyric (a "main drag" house, on Forty-second Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues) just two weeks after it opened. "The Only Girl" tried something wholly unprecedented in the writing of popular musicals: the piece was founded not on a star or on the usual bewitching diversions but on a *plot*. A silly plot: four men swear to stay bachelors forever, and four women at length defrost them, their antics bouncing off a through-line that connects the central male, a librettist hot to write the Great American Musical, with the central female, a composer. Herbert and his librettist, Henry Blossom, kept "The Only Girl" trim and fleet and almost sensible—so sensible that they were too busy writing character and plot songs to get more than one hit out of it, "When You're Away." A musical needs a solid story—or a star performance—to succeed in its season, but it needs a popular score to become a classic.

So "The Only Girl" made a mint and vanished, but not before inspiring the famous Princess Theatre musicals, with (mostly) books by Guy Bolton and P. G. Wodehouse, lyrics by Wodehouse, and music by Kern. The Princess shows followed the format of "The Only Girl": colorful middle-class characters in modern

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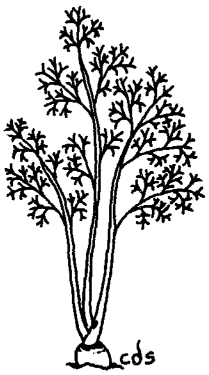
dress, living in more or less ordinary places; a small chorus; and a score that pursued the plot. "The Only Girl" was one of a kind, but the Princess shows constituted a series, and now history was made. The public was stimulated by the Kern-Wodehouse songs, partly because Kern was a melodist of extraordinary power but also because Wodehouse was something that no Broadway lyricist had ever been: a joker with a special voice—wistfully clever, romantic cut with whimsy. A lyric from "Oh Boy!" (1917) runs, "I was often kissed 'neath the mistletoe by small boys excited with tea." And, from the same show, there was "If I'd a garden where girlies would grow, you'd find me there with my spade and my hoe." And, from "Leave It to Jane" (1917): "Marc Antony admitted that what first made him skid was the wibbly, wobbly, wiggly dance that Cleopatterer did!"



By then, the century was pushing its twenties, and Kern's revolution in the construction of theatre scores had enlisted adherents in George Gershwin and Richard Rodgers. It is worth noting that their respective partners, George's brother Ira and Lorenz Hart, both wrote in a blithely zany yet at times eerily tender mode—one so far advanced beyond what Charles K. Harris would have thought desirable, not to say seemly (not to mention marketable), that it is Wodehouse who most certainly liberated them, as it was Kern who inspired Gershwin and Rodgers to find *their* unique voices. For by the late nineteen-twenties American popular song was thriving precisely because it had discovered diversity of style. In Harris's day, the whole world of song had been monolithic—a theme without variation. Then, by 1929 or so, Gershwin had poured the fun of pop into the structures of symphony; Rodgers and Hart had produced "Manhattan," "Mountain Greenery," "The Blue Room," "The Girl Friend," "Where's That Rainbow?," "My Heart Stood Still," and "Thou Swell"; and Kern and Hammerstein had written "Show Boat."

These men were alike in many ways, but they are best understood by their quirks, such as George Gershwin's use of "blue" harmony (emphasizing the flatted third and seventh of the scale), or Kern's increasing attachment to long-lined operetta melody, even in his most up-to-the-minute scores. Quirkiest of all was Cole Porter, a wealthy, gay Midwestern Wasp in a company that was almost entirely straight urban Jewish middle class. Like Irving Berlin (and, for that matter, George M. Cohan), Porter was also a singer-songwriter—not just a party entertainer but someone who actually made records, piping away in an amiably off-center voice, the twang of a soigné banshee. If the sound of the man was unlikely, so was his material: dreams of a love so intense it devours; an acerbic view of marriage disguised as wry social satire; and junkets into a world of rich, trendy, sensual honchos and wastrels, some imagined (the late—in fact, lynched—Miss Otis, the hostess of death Mrs. Lowsborough-Goodby, the Ugly Americans Mr. and Mrs. Fitch) but most quite real ("If Sam Goldwyn can with great conviction instruct Anna Sten in diction . . ."). When less noteworthy people turn up in Porter's art, they are mere categories: "the janitor's wife," who enjoys a more satisfying love life than a Porter heroine; or even the nation itself, where one goes "from Poland to polo in one generation." Porter sang of the Great World, the elect, while always worrying that he was writing himself out of the mass market.

In fact, he wasn't. By writing theatre music rather than hit tunes, Porter and his colleagues promoted a mass-market business into an art of such appeal that it became the music of a nation. And once the movies started singing, Hollywood sent for the Broadway craftsmen. Porter wrote two numbers for Paramount's "The Battle of Paris" in 1929, the first year of regular talkie production, and later enjoyed a very fruitful relationship with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (though it was Warner Brothers that filmed Porter's life, in 1946, as "Night and Day," one of the outstanding science-fiction films of the age). Nevertheless, where Kern, Gershwin, Rodgers, and their partners maintained an innocence in their jesting and respected an incorruptible majesty of romance, Porter always pushed the taboos. He had wit and he had dash, but he was smutty and tense, and his view of romance was ultimately a tragic one. Kern and Hammerstein write "Make-Believe"; Porter writes "Love for Sale." You would hardly take him for a founding father of the music of a nation. Porter is the guy living it up in Paris and Vienna with people like Elsa Maxwell and Noël Coward; the guy who marries an heiress but sneaks his fun in a Harlem bordello, because class is what you display, but sex is what you hide; the guy who steals the party singing "naughty" songs at the piano—irresistible songs, because under the wisecracks lies a startling music. It's urgently rhythmic; melodic, but aggressive, driving, explosive. If Kern—and, in a very different way, Berlin—broke in this generation between 1910 and 1920, Porter, along with Gershwin and Rodgers, created the music of the twenties and thirties.

AT first, Porter largely escaped notice, because of his unique world view. His is a heathen universe in which all times are now. The verse to "Just One of Those Things" cites the "end of the affair" envois of Dorothy Parker, Columbus (to Isabella), Abelard, and Juliet; and the saga of "Solomon," the king who avenges himself upon his thousand unfaithful wives, is unfolded in a Bibleland Paris-Harlem in which the Chief Eunuch is named Rastus Brown and the royal adulteresses ride in "diamond-studded" Hispanos to Ciro's.

In Porter, love is not consecrated but appetitive, under the control of "the gods"; he is fully aware that the passions such deities can unleash may shatter the world. Again and again, Porter refers to the ecstasy and horror of love at its hottest—its amazing power to affirm the ego but also its destructive impulses. "I Hate You, Darling" is a typical Porter song title and "Get Out of Town (before it's too late, my love)" a characteristic Porter plea—because love is so absolute that it swallows one's very identity. In "You're Too Far Away," the suitor looks forward to a time when "we're so close together that we/Can't tell any longer what's you and what's me."

Porter's love isn't only awesome; it's outlaw. It's homosexual, and Porter, despite a life that stylishly respected the cautions of his era, never really pretends it isn't. Of course, the shows that Porter wrote were strictly boy meets girl, but his lyrics insistently tug at the sophisticate's euphemisms. The singer of "I'm a Gigolo" defines his sexuality with the code term "lavender," and in "Farming," a look at celebrities who find agriculture chic, we are warned:

> Don't inquire of Georgie Raft
> Why his cow has never calfed.
> Georgie's bull is beautiful, but he's gay!

This could be impishness or rebellion. But the more one studies Porter's lyrics the more one hears an analyst at odds with the prevailing system. Consider, from the London revue "Wake Up and Dream!" (1929), "After All, I'm Only a Schoolgirl," on a tutor's sensual education of a young woman:

> He's an expert regarding marriage
> And teaches me a lot, too—
> When to order a baby carriage,
> And better still, when not to.

What could be more subversive of the patriarchal system? In the same show, "I'm a Gigolo" goes well beyond the "lavender" reference to blast the social order that insists upon marriage while tolerating this no-fault cheating:

> Yet when I see the way all the ladies
> Treat their husbands who put up the dough,
> You cannot think me odd
> If then, I thank God
> I'm a gigolo.

Does that read "Thank God I'm gay"? And note the rare use in a Porter lyric of the singular "God." Is this spit in the patriarch's face? Porter was bold that way. His only gay colleague, Lorenz Hart, was as playful, but he was reticent. Besides, when Hart did wax cynical—as in, say, "Falling in Love with Love"—his partner, Rodgers, would soar, compromising Hart's regret with rapture.

Porter, as his own composer, could thread words and music on a single spool, so when he speaks hard he sings hard, as in "I'm a Gigolo"—a draggy blues with plenty of flatted notes, a hangover set to music. Yet it is not so much that he speaks hard as that he sets new limits on what is "acceptable" in popular song. Who but Porter would write, in 1933, a number about cross-dressing, "Georgia Sand," another all-eras-are-now piece, which places George Sand and Alfred de Musset at parties boasting "French champagne and Russian ballets, Ellington's band

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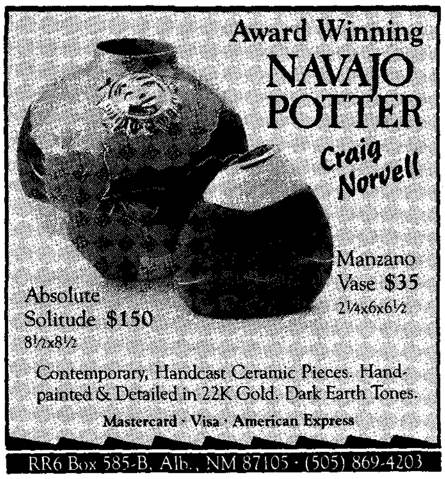

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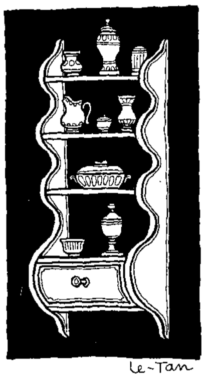
and Rudy Vallee's"? And who but Porter would dare, in 1928, in "Pilot Me," to use aviation as a metaphor for sex? "Strip my gears," the singer pleads. "Please give my ship/A maiden trip/ And we'll get the prize for speed." Porter intensifies his double-entendre at the close, when the singer assures his love, "And when afraid you are of going too far, then I'll just pilot you."

It was doubtless Porter's homosexuality that powered his satire, for it placed him at a certain remove from his favorite subject, the rituals of Western courtship and marriage. He delves into the humiliations and blisses of romance far more variously than anyone else in his age, and he often writes from the woman's point of view, further widening his perspective. The number of Porter's "woman" songs is astonishing: "The Laziest Gal in Town," "Find Me a Primitive Man," "The Queen of Terre Haute," "The Cocotte," "The Physician," "Where Are the Men?," "My Heart Belongs to Daddy," "Most Gentlemen Don't Like Love," "Give Him the Oo-La-La," "All I've Got to Get Now Is My Man," "Ace in the Hole," "Make a Date with a Great Psychoanalyst," "I Like Pretty Things," "I Hate Men," "A Woman's Career," "What Do You Think About Men?," "No Lover," "Never Give Anything Away," "Every Man Is a Stupid Man," "Without Love." And these are not merely songs for women, like the Gershwins' amiable "Boy! What Love Has Done to Me" or Kern, Wodehouse, and Clifford Grey's lightly feminist "You Can't Keep a Good Girl Down." Porter's lyrics for women reach more deeply into their experiences, now toying with them, now defying them, as in "A Lady Needs a Rest," whose catalogue of the duties of the stylish woman-about-town takes in not only "trying all the doodads that *Harper's* and *Vogue* suggest" but also "keeping her children sober and keeping her husband tight." "Why Marry Them?" warns, "As lovers they love you, and as your husbands they snore," and "Love 'Em and Leave 'Em" is a sexual equalizer, couching the traditional credo of the womanizer in a mother's advice to her daughter.



Did Porter see no pleasure in effortless monogamy? The songwriters of his generation routinely extolled romance, and Porter turned out a ton of sentimental songs, nostalgic, content, unpenetrating. But it is notable that after his first song success, "Old-Fashioned Garden," in 1919, very little of this side of Porter became popular. By the rules of American pop music, a love song is innocent, but Porter's most typical love songs are worldly. Even "I Love You," from "Mexican Hayride" (1944), famous for its clichés ("It's spring again, and birds on the wing again"), is in fact unusually fervent, disturbed by the discordant interval implied in the first three notes, a major seventh, and then stirred in the middle section (marked "appassionato"), the lines about spring and birds on the wing surging wildly upward.

On the other hand, Porter's acerbic songs aren't necessarily popular, either. Who knows "Why Marry Them?" or "Love 'Em and Leave 'Em"? The celebrated Porter, the Porter of the mass market, gives the listener lift and release. Launching a Porter medley during a show at the Waldorf-Astoria in 1957, Lena Horne referred to "the always surprising Cole Porter tunes." Right. Porter not only wrote songs but invented them, such as the "list" song, a succession of comparisons: birds, bees, educated fleas do it; you're an old Dutch master, Mrs. Astor, Pepsodent; picture Barbara Hutton without a nickel or poor Mr. Heinz, my dear, without a pickle; will it be Bach that I hear or just a Cole Porter song? The heavy concentration of names in Porter's lyrics is another innovation—that relentless spotlighting of everyone from Aphrodite to the Countess di Frasso. Oscar Hammerstein's characters didn't name-drop; Lorenz Hart mentioned only the very famous, whom any American might place; and Ira Gershwin's idea of a celebrity was Heine. It was Porter who carpet bombed pop music with the names of the great and near-great of city culture, and doing it inspired him to devise a new kind of song, preposterous, earthy, and aware—not a list song but a song that one of the listed might sing. "I Happen to Like New York" is an example: a hymn sung to an increasingly ecstatic bell-like clanging over off-centered bass booms; the gloriously drunken anthem of the cognoscente at something like 3 A.M. on the ninetieth floor.

In public, Porter seemed the obliging party entertainer, and, in anecdote, the dilettante, taking his work on jaunts to Giza or Singapore as other men commute, and, overhearing a chance phrase, crying impishly, "Title!" and immediately planning a song around it. Unseen, however, Porter was the craftsman, as painstaking as the dogged Hammerstein, and yet as natural, born to it, as the explosive George Gershwin. For instance, a Porter verse—the introductory section of a song, not unlike the recitative that precedes an aria (as in "Like the beat-beat-beat of the tomtom" in "Night and Day")—is often unusually elaborate. The first lines of the verse to "I've Got You on My Mind" ingeniously anticipate the refrain note for note, but in a different rhythm. In the same way, a Porter coda—literally, the "tail" of a song—can be unusually extensive, pushing beyond pop's traditional AABA format.

Some of Porter's songs are epics. "Begin the Beguine" is so luxuriously delineated that it's like the slow movement of a pop symphony, the entire thing generated from the launching figure of the fifth, sixth, and major seventh intervals of the scale over an undulating accompaniment—just the "haunting" effect that Porter needs in order to establish the beguine as a musical madeleine, the very playing of which "brings back a night of tropical splendor." The melody is sleek—innuendo set to maracas—until the climax, an importunate pounding that dies away to slivers of the main strain, reaching up and falling back to nothing. The song is not about the beginning of a beguine but about its fragility, its inability to continue, its end. The lyrics tell us this—"Let the love that was once a fire remain an ember"—but the music makes it matter. More than any of his coevals except Kern, Porter built his songs around musical ideas. "Begin the Beguine" would feel like the memory of a dead romance no matter what its lyrics said. "Blow, Gabriel, Blow" takes off on the toot of a horn—"Do you hear that playin'?" the first line replies—and "You're the Top" similarly starts not with words but with a hook, the rhythmic mecha-

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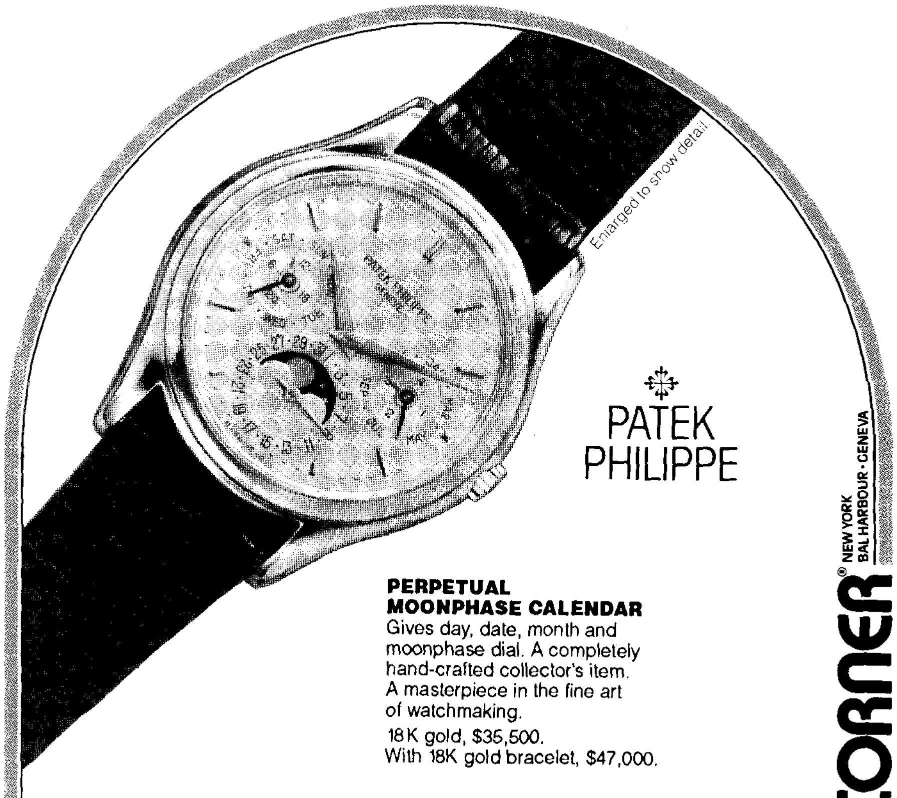

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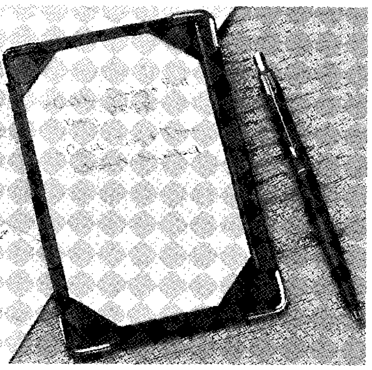

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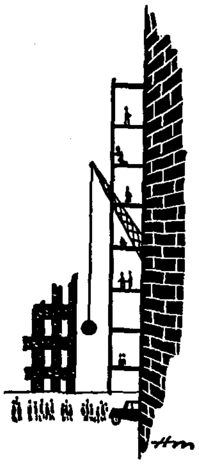
nism that structures the melody and plays on through the song, shaping its statement and response. "Swing That Swing" is almost wholly musical, a song made of jazzy blares for the brass which punctuate lyrics spoken rather than sung.

Porter's most characteristic musical tic is his insistent use of minor keys. A favorite example is "I Love Paris," doleful in C minor until it wells into C major at the exuberant close. But, as Porter observes in "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye," "how strange the change from major to minor," for he doesn't use the emotional release inherent in reaching the major as much as he uses the ambivalence of switching back and forth between major and minor. Porter's art is wholly ambivalent. It needs yet fears love, adores yet ridicules society's stars, happens to like New York yet loves Paris. A typical Porter melody is so uncertain that it constantly veers between the two basic rhythmic beats, 4/4 and 3/4, as in "I Get a Kick Out of You," which glides from quarter and half notes to triplets and back virtually from measure to measure, making the tune seem to float, unattached, above the accompaniment.

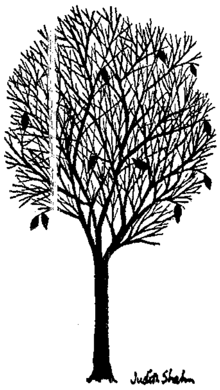


We don't necessarily hear this, because singers tend to deliver versions of a song rather than the song itself. Even Ethel Merman, who introduced "I Get a Kick Out of You," slurred the distinction between the twos and threes, not to mention singing, throughout her career, a wrong note in the verse of "You're the Top" (on "I always have found it best"). But Fred Astaire's "Night and Day," both on disk, with Leo Reisman's orchestra, and on the soundtrack of "The Gay Divorcée," closely observes Porter's composition, with its grasping syncopations and obsessive repeated notes, and we begin to comprehend the restless, intense nature of Porter's art. Yes, Porter is suave; so is Astaire. But Porter is hungry, and he can make even the breezy Astaire sound hungry, too. Remember, Astaire was nothing more than half of a sister-and-brother act when he met up with Porter. The show "Gay Divorce" (1932) was Astaire's first outing without his sister Adele, and the smart money said he couldn't make it as a comic and wasn't possible as a romancer. Sure, he danced, but only women stars like Marilyn Miller and Ann Pennington got by on dancing. Yet right after "Gay Divorce" closed its London run, Astaire went to Hollywood, and if "The Carioca" established him, it was "Night and Day" that reinvented him, found the romance in the dancer, the hunger in the man.

It isn't only syncopations and the beat-beat-beat of the tomtom in Porter. It's rhythm itself: unexpected jazzy explosions in the middle of a ballad; such propulsive energy that songs seem to be racing themselves to the finish; a flood of Latin dances, from "The Gypsy in Me," in 1934, through "I've Got You Under My Skin," "Ours," "My Heart Belongs to Daddy," "Make It Another Old-Fashioned, Please," "So Near and Yet So Far," "I Love You," "Sing to Me, Guitar," "Were Thine That Special Face," and "Silk Stockings," right up to "Mind If I Make Love to You?," in 1956. This is nervous music—as in "Anything Goes," which Porter recorded, singing to his usual self-effacing piano. The song is marked "moderato," but Porter takes it moderatissimo, more slowly than we generally hear it today. It's nearly crawling, yet, as each jumble of notes piles into the next jumble and as rhyme tops rhyme, we find a sort of Ritz-Carlton ragtime, music that gets a kick out of itself. Only George Gershwin, of Porter's colleagues, is as celebrated for his beat. But Gershwin has drive; Porter has *pulse*. He is seductive, sinuous. What made "Night and Day" one of the biggest international song hits of its decade was its sex appeal—the sensual effect of the urgently repeated notes in the verse and the title line, of the descending chromatic lines spanning nearly an octave, of the flashy breakout on "oh, such a hungry yearning," of all this ambivalent wondering, with a solid beat pumping through it. Or, no, it isn't sex appeal. It's sex.

That must be why Porter's songs sound so natural when they're played by dance bands, the fundamental pop interpreters in the nineteen-twenties and thirties. Published on ten-inch 78s at a maximum of about three minutes, the band recordings restructured theatre material, trading Broadway's eccentric singers for smoothed-out "microphone" vocalists, backed by more or less jazzing instrumentalists whose concern was not expressing the point of a song but responding to its shapes and contours. A typical dance-band side started with a musical hook and proceeded to an instrumental chorus, the verse, a vocal chorus, and, at last, a further instrumental, in which the band might stray somewhat from the composer's text in more or less free "improvisation"—and by then Jerome Kern was beside himself. The moderately fixed tempo that never gave the melody a chance to breathe, the insipid vocalism, the distracting hook, and the loss of theatre atmosphere were mean enough; the improvisation was infuriating. It wasn't Kern anymore—or Rodgers, or Gershwin, or even J. Fred Coots. It was a one-size-fits-all noise that made every song sound like every other. It absorbed Kern's elegy, Rodgers' beaming swing, and Gershwin's terse hustle into a vast, heartless beat. It turned "Ol' Man River" into "Black Bottom."

All the Broadway men felt some resentment of dance bands, for without the original-cast disks we take for granted today theatre scores could be heard as they were meant to be heard only in the theatre during a show's original run. However, it must be said that most musicals (except operettas) were to some extent related to the band sound even when they were tooting away in the theatre. Big-name bands routinely played in Broadway pits—the George Olsen Orchestra for "Whoopee" (1928) and Red Nichols' gang (which included Glenn Miller, Jimmy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, Gene Krupa, and Jack Teagarden) for Gershwin's "Girl Crazy" (1930). Even the wary Kern allowed Leo Reisman's orchestra onto the stage of "Good Morning, Dearie" (1921), and Olsen's boys entertained during the intermissions of "Sunny" (1925) and the finale of "The City Chap" (1925). Still, in the theatre Kern could control the sound. When it came to recordings, he could only listen and fume—at Paul Whiteman's cut of "Make-Believe," for instance, which emphasizes the song's bouncy interlude ("The game of just supposing . . .") until it's time for a vocal chorus and Bing Crosby blithely slips in to the wild thumping of a bass fiddle. It's delightful, but it isn't what Kern and Hammerstein had in mind for a love-at-first-sight meeting with tragic-poetic overtones. ("For to tell the truth," goes Bing, "I *do*-oo-*ooh!*") Even more out of kilter are the numerous band cuts of "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes"—especially Leo Reisman's with Tamara, who sang the number in "Roberta" (1933). Reisman thinks it's a band rendition; Tamara thinks it's "Roberta" 's original-cast single. So he's beating strict time and she's aspiring to the Higher Kern. It's pretty much a draw until Tamara gets majestic at the climax and the brass section ruthlessly cuts her down.



Not all of Broadway fared as poorly as Kern. Gershwin was a natural for band treatment, and some of Rodgers works quite well. But Porter came off the best, because Porter's music is, above all, rhythmic, and the essence of the jazz band was rhythm. So Harry Roy's cut of "I Get a Kick Out of You" revels in the snazzy hook that Porter wrote for the verse, running it right through the melody, and, if the vocalist is sloppy about the triplets, Roy's band is so fascinated by them that it gives the most correct reading the refrain has ever had. And so Lew Stone's cut of "Thank You So Much, Mrs. Lowsborough-Goodby" reveals the music of the bridge, a section that virtually all singers talk their way through. And so Xavier Cugat's "Begin the Beguine" creates a sort of Nights in the Gardens of Spain with its Latin orchestration, relegating the vocalist to a single line at the side's start and end.

The bands do not invariably ignore Porter's dramatic material; because so much of his style grew out of composing songs to be sung at parties, many of his numbers are self-contained vignettes. Jack Jackson's recording of "Miss Otis Regrets," made in England, casts the song as a phone call from Miss Otis's maid—the great Alberta Hunter (what luck!)—to Miss Otis's would-be host. (Porter's original "Madam" becomes "Mister.") The band gets a look-in first, then mischievously simulates the characteristic double ring of the British telephone, and

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Hunter begins the tale of the murderously lovelorn Miss Otis. After one verse, the operator bursts in with "Three more pennies, please," the host promises to return the call, the band steals another chorus, and we're back on the phone for more of Hunter's recitation. Thus the song is in fact made vivid by the band treatment, albeit transformed from a spoof of country blues into a foxtrot playlet for three.

In general, the dance band brings out Porter's rhythm not only in the up-tempo numbers but in the ballads. Porter has no "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," to be shattered by jazz; Porter *is* jazz. "Goodbye, Little Dream, Goodbye," another of Porter's minor-key laments, with a very subtle verse, reaches its apex in a recording by Jack Hylton's unusually large orchestra. You'd expect instrumentalists to be heedless of the song's delicate emotional content and to tear it to shreds, but at the climax twenty-six players soar through the chorus with a power as moving as it is formidable, a great column of sound dodging and leaping in time to Porter's syncopated reverie.

Even Nat Gonella, the naughty boy of English dance bands and a merciless rearranger and improviser, cannot out-jazz Porter, though he tries. A trumpeter somewhat comparable to Louis Armstrong in style, with a gritty voice and an endearing inability to pronounce an "r," Gonella turns "Blow, Gabriel, Blow" into a prayer meeting—we actually hear a hymn—broken up by the horn call, whereupon he honors Porter's verse and the first A of the chorus. That's all the Porter we get until the closing instrumental chorus, as the number now turns into a "top this" wind players' contest, Gonella urging his men on. "Blow, Patwick! Blow, Patwick!" he cries, to Pat Smuts, tenor saxophone. Gonella's "Swingin' the Jinx Away" sticks more closely to what Porter wrote, though he is still playing and singing on the rhythm rather than on the tune: almost rocking it, really; stripping it of everything but its beat.

Again and again, we find that the beat is central to Porter. It served him well when jazz gave way to swing, in the nineteen-thirties, for swing could pervert theatre music even more than jazz could. (This was when Rodgers and Hart wrote their protest song "I Like to Recognize the Tune.") Kern, always a bellwether in these matters, saw swing as so overwhelming that he adapted to it, in the Lyda Roberti numbers in "Roberta" and in virtually all of his Astaire-Rogers score "Swing Time" (1936). Porter didn't have to adapt: Artie Shaw's quite faithful reading of "Begin the Beguine," in 1938, was one of the biggest sellers of the age. Ironically, Porter was the flip side of the disk; the A-side title was "Indian Love Call," almost unrecognizable in Shaw's avid sendup, with the band men calling out punctuational noises and Tony Pastor contributing a vocal chorus that wins the prize for Least Amount of Rudolf Friml Actually Sung on a Friml Recording. It's excellent swing, in a truly intricate arrangement, and we can see why Bluebird intended it as the selling side of the disk. But it does show us how unstable theatre music was in this era, how strenuously "interpreted" it could be. So it's telling that Porter fits in so comfortably. Shaw's crew doesn't have to jerk "Begin the Beguine" around like "Indian Love Call," because Porter can speak for himself even in the new language. There is no vocal, just the sounding of the hook—a smoothly throbbing swing version of Porter's own—and then Shaw's clarinet over the band. It was commonly said in the industry that "the intro sold the record." No: it was Porter, and Shaw's technically spectacular rising glissando at the climax.

One is tempted to say that the typical Porter number is a love song told to a beat, not only because Porter invented this kind of American ballad but also because, unlike the Porter list song and the Porter Latin number, it never suffered imitation. Still, what's quintessential? "Let's Do It" but not "So in Love"? "Night and Day" but not "Anything Goes"? I find Porter at his most characteristic in a lost classic, "The Kling-Kling Bird on the Divi-Divi Tree," which was the first number written on Porter's world cruise with Moss Hart—the cruise that resulted in "Jubilee" (1935), one of Porter's greatest scores. Porter and Hart put up in Jamaica, where, so legend has it, Porter hears something strange in the air and asks someone what it is.

"Kling-kling."

"What?"

"Kling-kling, sir. Kling-kling *bird*."

Porter wants it pointed out.

"There."

"Where?"

"*There*. Divi-divi tree where, sir."

"The kling-kling bird on the divi-divi tree," Porter amusedly repeats. Then, smiling, "Title!"

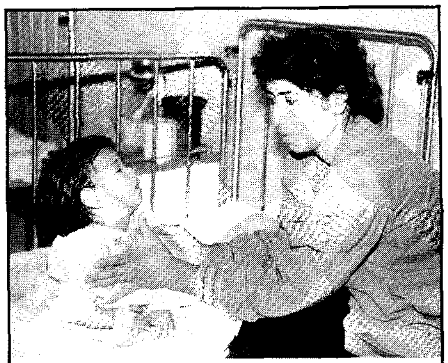
Or something like that. "The Kling-Kling Bird on the Divi-Divi Tree" is the recounting, by a Noël Coward-like playwright named Eric Dare, of his romantic adventures on just such a world cruise, and it is ultimate Porter in its unusual structure (a rondo, and longer even than "Blow, Gabriel, Blow" or "Begin the Beguine"), its powerful and diverse rhythmic energies, its playfully bawdy content, and its casual juxtaposition of the old-fashioned and the ultra-contemporary. It's a Gilbert and Sullivan patter song, complete with echoing chorus, yet it's the randiest thing Broadway had ever heard, the last word in conservative formalism set in a code only the next age could unscramble. For everywhere that Eric Dare travels, the kling-kling bird appears to warn him away from sex—with women. The double meanings count among Porter's most outrageous, as in Dare's platonic diversion with a Pacific islander, "Pure Tahitian by her mother, and pure French by the missionary's brother":

It was hard for me to say "no"
When she asked me to visit her volcano.

Or in Dare's relationship with "a very broad-minded cannibaless":

We had dallied for a week or more,
When she said, one ev'ning, in front of her
door,
"Won't you come inside and make poi?"

Long as it is, "The Kling-Kling Bird" is in fact the third section of a musical scene in which Dare's fans await his return in a comic lament and Dare arrives to a smashing waltz. Only then does he run through the song proper—in all, seven minutes entirely through-sung, routine in operetta but rare in a musical comedy, especially one by Porter. Of the major Broadway composers of his day, he is the only one perceived as unambitious, a master of shows meant to be nothing but fast and funny. There is no "Show Boat," "Of Thee I Sing," or "Carou-



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sel" in Porter's catalogue. What's "Jubilee"? A farce about four members of a royal family off on a spree of tourism and sensuality; fast and funny. Actually, Porter *was* ambitious—but more about his songs than about his shows.

IRONICALLY, when Porter began—with "See America First" (1916)—he was ordinary, even derivative. We see flashes of the Cole to come in his second Broadway show, "Hitchy-Koo 1919": in perhaps the first of the Porter list songs, "I Introduced," and in "Bring Me Back My Butterfly," a wicked sendup that blends ragtime with quotations from "Madama Butterfly" and ends on a bizarrely unresolved chord just like the one that ends the opera. Most prophetic of all the "Hitchy-Koo" songs is "My Cozy Little Corner in the Ritz," on society's high and low life as seen from a carefully chosen table, " 'Cause I like to see the kings and let the queens see me."

SMALL MYTH FOR MY FATHER

I hear him nights under the bridge,
moss-shouldered, arranging the skulls
of children like jack-o'-lanterns
on the rocks. He's really not

so fearsome, he wants the tallow
to become their skin, plug up
their eyes so they can see the darkness
as he does. He lives on the cracked

marrow of baby deer and Indian turnips,
jack-in-the-pulpits, licking the leaflike
spathe round the clublike spadix dry.
He's so lonely he would die

if he thought the dark would keep him
company, and not turn its huge shoulders
of dark away from him, like the hills.
Sometimes he kisses the toads,

pressing his lips to their hard tallow
lips, the sound of the creek
turning the paddle wheel in the miniature-
golf course, his stalking grounds.

—Stephen Perry

• •

Like Rodgers and Hart, Porter found little work on Broadway in the early nineteen-twenties, though the Gershwins and Hammerstein had launched their careers and Kern was becoming celebrated. Yet only five years after "Hitchy-Koo," in two numbers from "The Greenwich Village Follies" (1924), Porter set his style, both in sound and in subject matter: in the joyfully bluesy "I'm in Love Again" and the sly "Two Little Babes in the Wood," an updating of Hans Christian Andersen that moves the babes from the enchanted forest to the city of the speakeasy and of sex for rent. Porter recorded the number himself, and, for once, his rudimentary piano style takes stage, pounding out the refrain's shift from fairy-tale waltz to the jiving dance of the decadent. "And the whole town's agreed," Porter gleefully concludes, "that the last thing in speed is the two little babes in the wood."

Four years later, "Let's Do It" put Porter over, and four years after that "Night and Day" swept the world. Yet Porter went on worrying that he was too sophisticated. A line that calls a gigolo "just a pet that men forget and only tailors remember" was not likely to touch a universal nerve—what Irving Berlin appeared to do so effortlessly. So when Porter's London show "Nymph Errant" (1933) flopped—even with Gertrude Lawrence in the lead, a handsome C. B. Cochran production, and what Porter believed was his best work yet—he resolved to pull back from the sophistication and write more broadly, and ended up with one of the most popular musical comedies of its day, "Anything Goes" (1934), which spilled forth five song hits. The score is not as suave as that for "Gay Divorce" or as brilliant as that for "Nymph Errant," yet it conveys all the Porter "things"—the romance and the drollery, the respect for the famous, and the adoration of the beautiful. (One of the "You're the Top" metaphors, the highly typical Porter observation "You're the moon over Mae West's shoulder," actually manages to trap romance, drollery, fame, and beauty in a single line.)

Heartened by the enthusiasm with which "Anything Goes" was received, Porter unleashed his talent for his next show, "Jubilee," but it was a costly flop, and Porter was shaken. The blame for its failure is traditionally assigned to Mary Boland, who ducked out of her contract to get back to Hollywood, but the show counted seven principals besides Boland—and she wasn't billed above the title. "Jubilee" was hurt by Moss Hart's so-so book and what must have seemed like an excess of that Porter sophistication. The show was so laden with allusions that by the time you placed Fritzy Kreisler and H. G. Wells you had missed the jokes about Averell Harriman and Billy the Oysterman. And it was so full of ideas that one song began, "If ever, to your woe, love comes to you someday," while the refrain of another asked, "Why shouldn't I take a chance when romance passes by?" You have to be very smart and work hard to follow entertainment this busy—and, as Lynn Fontanne once said, "after six weeks, it's all tourists." Sadly, the greatest asset of "Jubilee" was also its greatest drawback: the gigantic score. That seven-minute scene built around "The Kling-Kling Bird" typifies the wealth of melody that Porter lavished on this show and the precision with which he built his elaborate structures, and the whole thing was too much for the public to handle. Even "Just One of Those Things" and "Begin the Beguine" were ignored, lost in the pack. (Artie Shaw's 78 was released two and a half years after "Jubilee" closed.) "Polished, urbane, and adult playwrighting in the musical field," Porter ruefully observed at the time, "is strictly a creative luxury."

Thereafter, Porter rigorously poptuned himself, in legs-and-laffs shows and movie musicals. Yet he would not betray his sense of craftsmanship. He simply tried to write less about royal families on sprees and more about—Well, what else was there? To a man like Porter, art was stylized autobiography. He *was* a royal family on a spree. But note that the project he took on immediately after "Jubilee" was M-G-M's "Born to Dance" (1936), about sailors and their girlfriends and putting on a show. Porter was trying to redefine himself. "Hey, Babe, Hey" is irritatingly simplistic, especially as it is sung in the film, to a kind of hurdy-gurdy orchestration, though it is in fact three different refrains, performed one after another, then simultaneously. "Rap Tap on Wood" is one of those devilish Porter devices, running its main strain right into the release in a sort of AAAA form, far ahead of its day. Porter was not so much writing down to his audience as writing tricky music that did its best to sound easy, and also deëmphasizing the world of gigolos and cocottes and royal families. He did allow one "sophisticated" number into "Born to Dance," though: "Love Me, Love My Pekinese," so syncopated that at first hearing it's impossible to identify the tune.

WHY this insistence on song hits? Porter's generation on Broadway proved that you don't have to try for hits, because expert writing yields hits as a matter of course. The purpose of a musical was not to produce hit songs; the purpose of great songs was to provision a great show. Nothing made that more apparent than the arrival of Rodgers and Hammerstein, in the nineteen-forties. Writing for character and atmosphere, they produced not only hit songs but entire hit scores. What especially impressed Porter was Hammerstein's habit of switching voices not only from show to show but from character to character within a single show—something Porter had not attempted since "Jubilee." So, just as the success of "Anything Goes" had encouraged Porter to extend himself in "Jubilee," the emergence of Rodgers and Hammerstein's artistically symmetrical "musical play" now urged Porter on to two of his greatest scores—"Kiss Me, Kate" (1948) and "Out of This World" (1950). "Kate," of course, is a classic, not least for the bracingly ersatz grandeur with which Porter made Shakespeare intelligible to musical comedy, as in "I've Come to Wive It Wealthily in Padua"—a solo with choral interjections set to a vaguely menacing folkish march that develops a few lines from "The Taming of the Shrew" into a stream of pseudo-Elizabethan, culminating in a "hunny, nunny, nunny, and a hey, hey, hey."

"Out of This World," which Porter, flushed with the biggest success of his life, wrote with all worries about hit songs and the masses put by, may well be his finest achievement, as amply musical as "Jubilee" yet even more beautifully dramatized. The major difference between an amusing musical and a great one is that in a great one you can parse the action just by hearing the score, and in that sense "Out of This World" is Porter's masterpiece—even though, by the time its troubled tryout had ended, its leading man, William Eythe, wasn't singing a note. Granted, Eythe was not a singer in the first place. He had come to the Broadway musical from the Hollywood musical—the Twentieth Century Fox musical, actually, in which the dubbing of singers was so habitual that Jeanne Crain, whose range was middle C, reigned as a Queen of Song. It's a small point, perhaps. Charlotte Greenwood, the star of "Out of This World," was a Fox alumna herself, and she not only did her own singing in the show but garnered the reviews of her career. Still, this heavy dependence on performers, and also on librettists and directors—George Abbott, who took over the direction of "Out of This World" in Philadelphia, made his contribution by throwing "From This Moment On" out of the show—reminds us how perilous so collaborative an endeavor as the musical can be to a talent as sensitive as Porter's, and how difficult it is to analyze any such career without considering a Guy Bolton or a Moss Hart, a Mary Boland or an Ethel Merman. Theatre doesn't know from platonic concepts; it's a test tube of volatile chemicals. This is why the current revival of the work of Kern, the Gershwins, Rodgers and Hart, and Porter is torn between reconstructing entire shows (either in full-out revival or in concert staging) and simply extracting songs for enjoyment out of the context of what the star needed and what the director demanded.

Abbott never did correct "Out of

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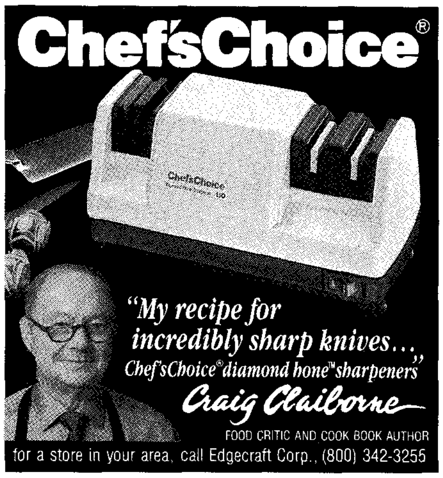

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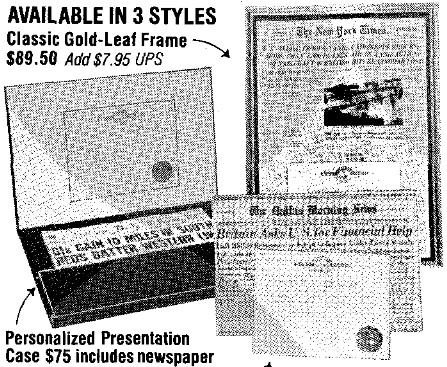

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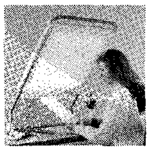

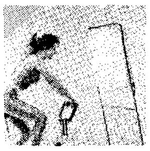

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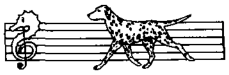

This World." It flopped, and Porter, disenchanted once again, rehabilitated himself with less "sophisticated" material—"Can-Can" (1953), "Silk Stockings" (1955), the movies "High Society" (1956) and "Les Girls" (1957), and, on television, "Aladdin" (1958). Then he put down his pen. Lonely, angry, and driven to despair by the crippling horseback-riding accident in 1937 that finally resulted in the amputation of his right leg, Porter counted the hours, and died in 1964. He had outlasted almost all his colleagues, and, of those who were not dead, only Richard Rodgers was still working.

HOWEVER, by the sixties the second great revolution in twentieth-century pop music was under way: rock. The new music swept Broadway aside more ruthlessly than Porter's generation had crushed the hacks of Tin Pan Alley, for, after all, the scores of "Lady, Be Good!" and "The Garrick Gaieties," and even "Show Boat," had grown out of the Alley tradition—"Show Boat" actually interpolated Charles K. Harris's monumental hit "After the Ball." Rock had entirely different antecedents—black rhythm and blues and white country music. Its instrumentation, singing style, simplistic harmony, and uncluttered lyric ideas—even the attire and the social outlook of its performers—bore no likeness to what Broadway took for granted. Yes, Buddy Holly wore a bow tie, but Jerry Lee Lewis destroyed pianos and married his thirteen-year-old second cousin. Most important, rock was autotelic—not an element of theatre, film, or radio variety hours but a thing in itself. Rock was music invented in response to a culture, that of postwar American youth. While the Broadway craftsmen of Porter's day had to marshal an audience for what they planned to write, rock's audience was already there, restively waiting for "Shrimp Boats Are A-Coming" and "Hello, Young Lovers" to get out of the way—and roll over, Beethoven.

At first, the attitude of rock's audience was gleefully rebellious. After all, during rock's first decade (circa 1955-1965) the authorities were at the very least suspicious of the music, and at times they actively attempted to suppress it. For a teen-ager, simply listening to rock was a liberating, political act. The archons of pop in Porter's day—bandleaders like Paul Whiteman and radio hosts like Kate Smith—were archons of the system. But rock's archons—disk jockeys and concert promoters—were perceived as enemies of the system, unless they contrived to tame not only the music but its very scene, its culture, with neatly dressed kids addressing Dick Clark as "Sir." Eventually, the rebellion turned into a passionate commitment to the music as something basic and necessary to life. By contrast, Porter and his colleagues took over American music but never American life. They were everywhere, from theatre to film, on radio and records, and what they themselves didn't write they influenced; one was literally raised on them. But while we can speak of a rock culture, a way of living that is centered upon this music and its world view, we could never have spoken of a Broadway culture.

Rock is protean. It changes its style, thought, and instrumentation every ten years or so—as when the first decade, of "rock and roll," gave way in the mid-sixties to the larger idea of a "rock" that could encompass the experimenting Beatles, the more traditionally rocking Rolling Stones, and the folk-mythic Bob Dylan. Porter's Broadway, by contrast, held power without significant alteration for two generations—his first Broadway show opened in 1916 and his last in 1955. Rock isn't even a specific form of music now, as it was when Elvis sang it; today, rock is virtually all current non-Broadway pop music, so rock's writers have a lot more latitude than Porter had. When writers of his time moved out of their signature styles, they reached pastiche—Kern's evocations of bygone eras in certain parts of "Show Boat," for example, or Gershwin's operetta takeoffs. When Porter tried country, as in "Miss Otis Regrets" or "Friendship," it had to be spoof; and "Don't Fence Me In," apparently not a spoof, has long been regarded as the Aberrant Cole Porter Song and is usually omitted from his published songbooks, although it is, without question, his best-known song. But when rock artists try country—Bruce Springsteen, for instance, ranging far from his accustomed high-tech rock and roll on his ascetic, brilliant, not-exactly-country-but-what-else-would-one-call-it album "Nebraska"—they are simply opening another room in rock's mansion. Crossover is such a formidable idea in the performing of traditional Broadway scores that it has generated a cycle of recordings in which the Opera House goes Forty-second Street. But there is no recognition of crossover in rock, because so much of rock *is* crossover, as the Beatles more or less discovered in "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band": one cut is psychedelic and another antique toe-tap; one ballad is soothed by strings and harp and another hopped up on the Indian tablas; the opening is a saucy trove of "curtain going up" clichés and the finale is bewildering contemporary naturalism. The group's so-called White Album goes even further, as a retrospective of rock styles from the Beach Boys and Chuck Berry, through piano jive and folk guitar, to blues and ragtime.

The Beatles introduced the notion of pop as art, much as Porter's generation did with its "Show Boat"s and "Carousel"s. However, beyond Broadway's fundamental forms of operetta and musical comedy (along with a possible third form blending the two) there really wasn't any other mode for Porter and his kind to work in. Gershwin was always Gershwin, even when composing opera, and Porter's last scores aren't at all different from what he was writing in 1930. These men could polish their style but never *transform* it, whereas rock keeps inventing—not only effecting important shifts in style but achieving immediate impact with them. When in 1965 Bob Dylan abandoned folk's acoustic guitar for rock's electric guitar, or when three years later he began a song on the weirdly symbolic and ritualistic album "John Wesley Harding" with "There was a wicked messenger, From Eli he did come, With a mind that multiplied the smallest matters"—then, simply, new worlds were discovered. So crucial was this music to the nation's youth—and by now that generation is well into its forties—that whenever rock entered a new phase the whole world took note. "The closest Western Civilization has come to unity since the Congress of Vienna . . . was the week the *Sgt. Pepper* album was released," *Rolling Stone's* critic Langdon Winner wrote. Try to think of anything comparable in the world of Cole Porter, and you see how enormously influential rock has been. And it affects

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how all earlier music is perceived and performed, for it is by now the only style with which most Americans are familiar.

This creates incongruities, to put it gently. The performers of old were rich in the conventional gifts—singing, dancing, comedy, charm. Rock culture is so encompassing that it not only includes these qualities but surrounds them with others, which are less gifts than attitudes. Rock isn't just music; it's an agenda, and not always a clearly expounded one. Rock is antisystem, subversive, yet its profits (and its record-company corporate leadership) make it the Big Oil of art. Rock's performers often unite in benefit concerts on humanitarian grounds, yet its impulses can seem demented, aimlessly destructive. Its stars can be dead by thirty, and its oldest top-line act, the Rolling Stones, has long been taken as a symbol of the excesses of rock's nightmare side. In a sense, rock has been punk all its life.

Yet rock singers have one major responsibility that was undreamed of when Fred Astaire and Marilyn Miller ruled the stage: today, musicians not only sing the music but write it. They are singer-songwriters. It was the Beatles who, as tireless authors of their material, made this change possible; before them, writers usually created the songs and singers presented them. The Beatles made this change not only possible but necessary, for after them the cult of the totally self-contained rock artist demoted anyone who didn't claim at least a part-time byline. In a recent *Rolling Stone* interview, Desmond Child said, "It's terrible the way performers are pressured to be brilliant songwriters. Whoever says Ella Fitzgerald had to write the Cole Porter songs?" As it happens, though, Child has been until very recently one of rock's secrets—a "co-writer" (which may be a euphemism for "ghost"), who makes it happen for many a rock singer.

All this feeds into the amazing authority with which today's music is sung. Not even the most solid voices of old Broadway could feel so self-sufficient; what could be more confident than a performer whose very singing—whatever its quality—constitutes an act of historical authenticity? He or she is answerable to no one. And where does this leave the great pop music of the past? True, "Anything Goes" was triumphantly revived in New York in 1987, in a somewhat renovated form, and we have as well the meticulously faithful concert revivals, such as the recent "Fifty Million Frenchmen," one of Porter's most ebullient scores, staged at the Alliance Française with the inevitable habitués—Kim Criswell, Howard McGillin, Jason Graae. But these actors, along with such other stalwarts of the revival movement as Judy Kaye, Paige O'Hara, Davis Gaines, George Dvorsky, and Paula Laurence, are working in dreamland. They are marvellous—so much at ease with tropes and shtick over half a century old—but they're the thing that *was*. We need them, and we look forward to the "Fifty Million Frenchmen" recording, promised for next month. But if this music is to live it must come to terms with the present—or, rather, today's musicians must come to terms with this music.

What *is* the Cole Porter performing style? Look at the wide variety of personalities who sang in his shows and films—Jessie Matthews and Sophie Tucker, Bob Hope and Bobby Clark, Bea Lillie and Irene Bordoni, Danny Kaye and Alfred Drake, Mary Martin, James Stewart, Gertrude Lawrence, Eve Arden, Nelson Eddy, June Havoc, Judy Garland, Hildegarde Neff. It's more a carnival than a style.

We can take one measure of Porter in Ethel Merman, who sang five Porter leads, all written expressly for her voice and character. A specialist in "tough broad" types and the foremost practitioner of the "belt" singing style, Merman marks another of Porter's breakaways from his colleagues, for they devised their heroines mainly for sopranos. Merman's louder and deeper delivery suggested something earthier, affirming the sexual honesty in Porter's lyrics and the worldly tolerance of his perspective. Porter clearly adored Merman, not least for the power with which—in the days when musicals weren't miked—she could send his work straight up to the last row of the balcony. For Merman, Porter could create numbers such as no other composer wrote, using her uniquely clarion voice instrumentally—in "Ridin' High," for instance, which is built almost entirely upon a

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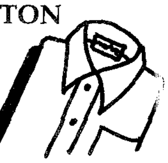

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two-note phrase, falling then rising, as the orchestra zings along and the voice literally rides high, capping the movement with long-held notes that have no verbal content. Merman had excellent diction as well, and that was no small matter to Porter: he attended rehearsals with a whistle, blowing it when a singer failed to articulate a lyric.

Porter apparently also relished Merman's shoot-on-sight social style, direct to a fault. When she first meets up with the hero Bill Johnson in "Something for the Boys" (1943), she's so tough that a leering soldier wonders if this "is the womanhood I'm fighting to protect." Merman fires back—and I mean *fires*—"And this is the womanhood *I'm* fighting to protect!" There was no politesse in either Merman or the characters she played, and to Porter, who spent his career musing upon the hypocrisy of the rich and famous, that was refreshing. His shows tended to give her some working room, some *rights*. Merman's most famous role, in Irving Berlin's "Annie Get Your Gun" (1946), ended with her having to forswear her unerring marksmanship in order to land her runner-up boyfriend, and her greatest role, in Jule Styne and Stephen Sondheim's "Gypsy" (1959), found her abandoned by her lover when she insisted on fulfilling herself not in marriage with him but through the career of her daughter. Porter didn't like a compromised Merman. Besides, her trumpet call just didn't suggest She Who Gets Slapped. Merman's bold bright power remains unchallenged in Broadway lore, but it is worth noting that she could soften her noise at tender moments. A live recording of "Make It Another Old-Fashioned, Please," Merman's big torch number from Porter's "Panama Hattie" (1940), reveals a sweet phrase here and there, even a pianissimo; and she has the wit to broaden the vowels for comic effect in the coda ("*Leave* out the cherry, *leave* out the orange"). Indeed, the audience laughs. But Merman's uniqueness brings us back to the starting point: no one incomparable can establish a performing style.

Singers of Porter in later years are a very mixed bunch, though a pattern may be discerned: elegance works, and jazz works. That's a contradiction, perhaps, but so was Porter, as we've noticed. Ella Fitzgerald misses it, ul-

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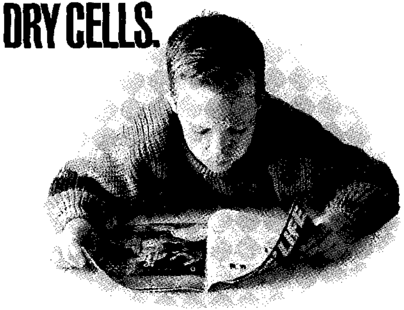

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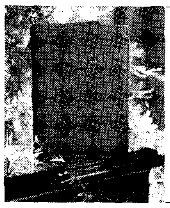

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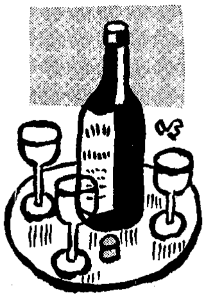
timately, in her classic two-disk set for Verve, from 1956. The magnificence of her instrument and her velvety phrasing disarm us. As sheer music-making the album deserves its reputation, and the swingy, less dramatic songs, like "Too Darn Hot" and "Ace in the Hole," come off wonderfully. It's Porter's *character* that Fitzgerald cannot connect with: she pays no price in "So in Love," fills out a form during "You're the Top."

Jazz artists revel in Porter—Charlie Parker, for instance, on an all-Porter recital recorded late in his career, and Billie Holiday, who, apparently alone among vocalists, sees "Let's Do It" not as a catalogue but as an invitation: "Let's *do* it." Dinah Washington's "I've Got You Under My Skin" is electric, and Louis Armstrong's "Let's Do It," addressed to "Mama," is so lazily insistent that it runs for nearly nine minutes. But jazz often surges too far from the text to let the music maintain its identity. Washington starts out fine—just voice and drums for the first A, bass fiddle added for the second A, piano for the bridge, and, at last, some superb trumpet solos after the vocal. It's great music, but it isn't the song anymore. It's a new piece, composed by the players. And Armstrong pits the melody against the beat so cleanly that the song sounds naked. We long for someone more of Porter's world, debonair yet conflicted.



For this reason, Joan Morris's Porter album doesn't work. The smile in her voice zestfully re-creates the traditions of old Broadway; on her Kern album, "Silver Linings," she denotes the shift from early Kern, the cutup, to late Kern, the cantor. But Morris lacks the night-and-day of Porter; she's *all* day—someone whose bedtime precludes the singing of torch songs, or the experience of the all-out intensity in romance that the torch song was invented to punish. When Lena Horne glides through "How's Your Romance?" or "From This Moment On," biting off the words as if imparting utterly necessary but strangely trivial confidences, we hear someone who knows what Porter knows. Similarly, Mabel Mercer, back when her instrument was able to respond to her expressive needs, sang an effortlessly precise Porter, the very glass of fashion and urbanity. "One of those things," she'll mutter, shrugging, or "*Too . . .* HOT!" she'll cry, recalling; and "gossamer wings" is phrased incredulously, as if asking "Can it ever be *that* good?" Listening to her Porter recital on Atlantic, cut some years later than her "Just One of Those Things," we know we are in secure hands right from the swinging piano vamp that launches the first song, "It's D'Lovely." This is a new Porter, looser, smoother than he sounded in his heyday. But it is authentic.

Bobby Short's two-disk set of 1971 is a modern classic, not only for the highly special readings he gives the songs but for the unhackneyed choice of numbers, providing us with a comprehensive Porter—from the standard to the curio, from the soirées into bed. Short, his own accompanist, surrounds the material as no one else could, out of pure versatility of approach. His "I'm in Love Again" starts on a bluesy shuffle bass that is completely right yet shockingly modern; his "How Could We Be Wrong?" is fiercely delicate, a consultation with the gods in charge of reckless acts; and his "Why Shouldn't I?" catches exactly the fearful hunger that Porter detects in romance, pronouncing the lyrics with such care that ordinary words—"discreetly," "free," "personally"—seem to have double meanings. On the line "Miss Peggy Joyce says it's good," Short forces all the power and fame and fury of the rich and popular and loveless hetero/gay that Porter really was into a single image—a frenzy caught, for one moment, standing perfectly still in a mask.

What Horne, Mercer, and Short have, besides their musicianship, is intelligence. You don't need to be wise to sing Gershwin or Kern; it helps with *some* Rodgers and Hart; but it is de rigueur with all Porter. Yet who sings intelligently today? Only cabaret specialists, who, like the casts of those old-show revivals, are marginal in today's music. Once again, it is rock that sets the style, and it is rock's singers who will have to teach us our Porter.

THIS they have now done, on last fall's album "red hot + blue"—twenty different acts tackling Porter, the proceeds to go to AIDS charities. The recording, conceived by John

Carlin, expands upon a series of earlier anthologies, developed by Hal Wilner, in which various talents interpret the music of Thelonious Monk, Nino Rota (in his Fellini soundtracks), Kurt Weill, and Walt Disney films. The Rota disk blends faithful rehearings with very assertive jazz expoundings, and the Weill disk, barring a few cuts, hews surprisingly close to the established Weill sound—especially in some touching bits of "Johnny Johnson," arranged by Van Dyke Parks. But it is the Disney album, "Stay Awake," that most arrests the ear, for its wide assortment of performers and its revisionist approach. The album is a gallimaufry, very roughly bonded by voice-over recitations and medley titles, such as "Three Inches Is Such a Wretched Height" (from "Alice in Wonderland": the diminished heroine's faux pas addressed to the Caterpillar). Some of "Stay Awake" is charmingly reinvested—Los Lobos samba-ing into "I Wan'na Be Like You" (from "The Jungle Book"), which the movie played in mock bebop complete with sketten-dooten-daten scat—but Betty Carter jazzes Snow White's "I'm Wishing" to death, and Yma Sumac, forgotten but not gone, yodels Sleeping Beauty's "I Wonder" into a Mayan rite. Still, there's something magical—Disneyesque—in hearing the toasting of so much white bread. And at the end we do get Ringo Starr, rock's only equivalent of the sweetness that kids associate with Disney, singing "When You Wish Upon a Star," with a trumpet solo for Herb Alpert. ("Take it, Herb," Ringo murmurs, respectful of the holy nature of this mother of all theme songs.)

The "red hot + blue" album ranges far less broadly than "Stay Awake," both in concentrating on the work of a single writer and in using performers drawn strictly from the world of rock. Here, at last, the anthology format will be tested: rock and Cole. Of course, rockers have been covering show tunes from the start, if sparsely. The Platters recorded "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," and did so somewhat more faithfully, in fact, than the dance bands had. The Beatles, before they made the performing of one's own work an article of faith, covered "Till There Was You," from "The Music Man," and Sting looked in on the old Vivian Ellis cheer-up ballad, "Spread a Little Happiness," from "Mr. Cinders." But

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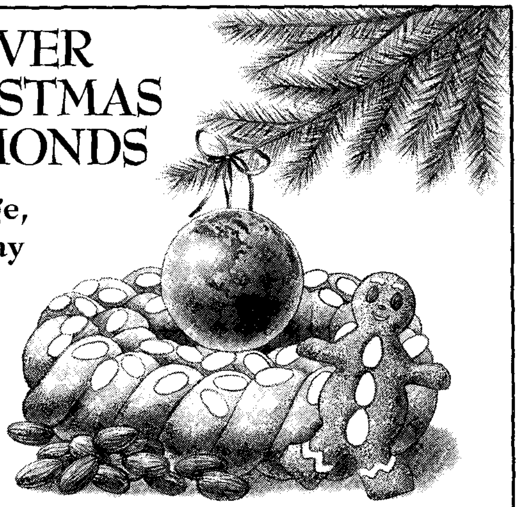

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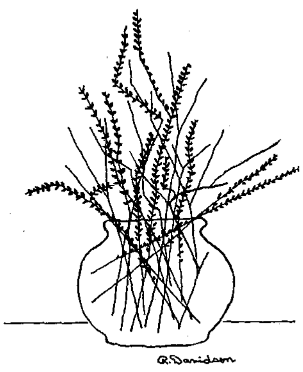
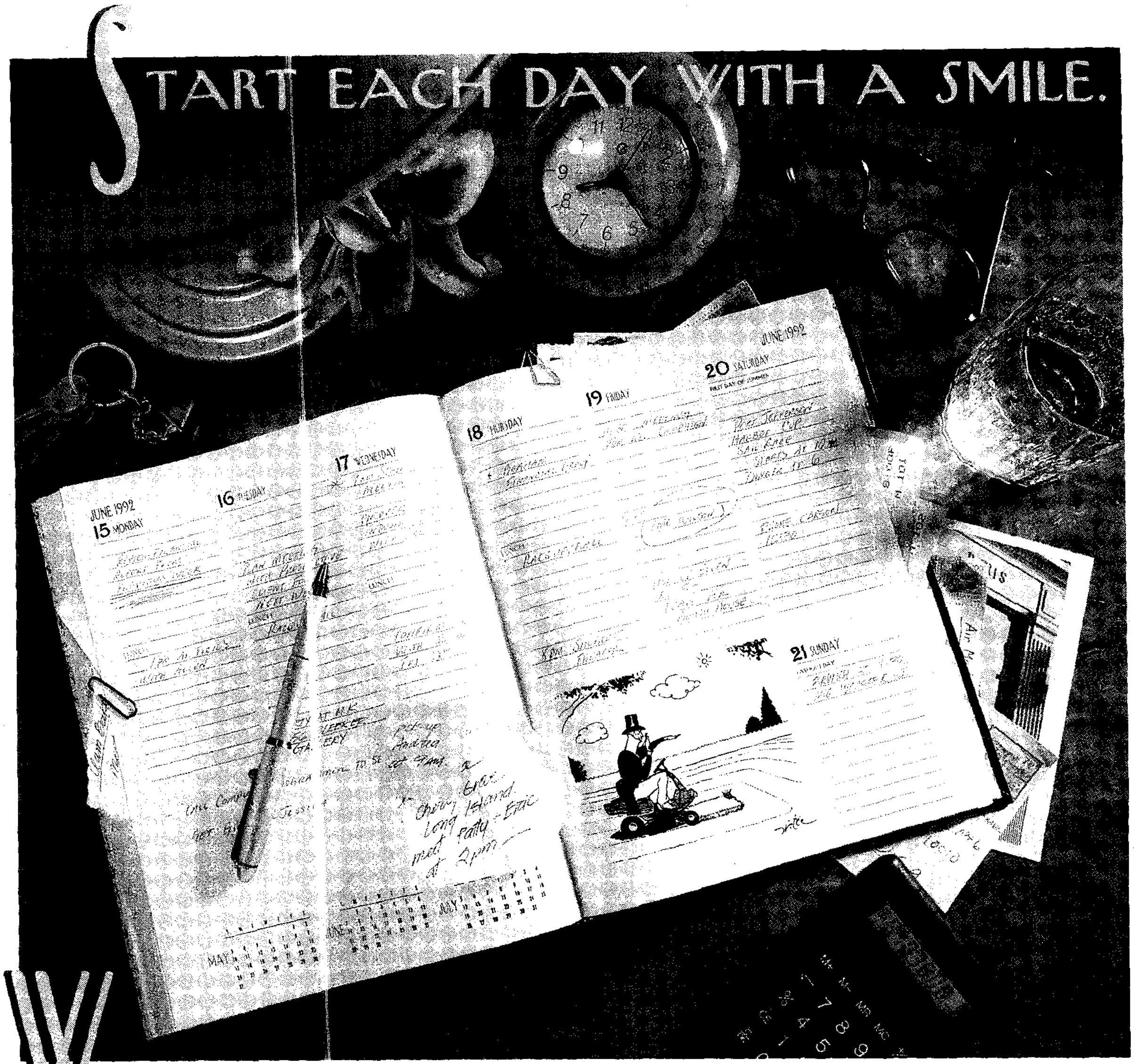
all these performances found the singers responding to melody in an almost generous way. There is no sense of challenge in these cuts; what the Beatles made of "Till There Was You" is not really comparable to what they did later with their own "A Day in the Life" or "Penny Lane." In effect, it wasn't the Beatles; that is, it wasn't contact, just a sighting.

But "red hot + blue" is David Byrne, Sinéad O'Connor, U2, the Neville Brothers, Annie Lennox (of Eurythmics), Jimmy Somerville, and Iggy Pop, among others, so we know that Porter and rock are going to mate. Porter's rhythmic energy will draw them together, much as it appealed to the dance bands of his day. But Porter shares more with these musicians: an openness in dealing with sex, a distaste for anything remotely religious or sanctimonious, a rebelliousness—even the air of autobiography in his lyrics, for, from Dylan on, rock has been expected to reflect the personality of its creators. There is no equivalent today of Al Jolson or Sophie Tucker singing Dixie and Mammy songs; no poses. You are what you sing.

So "red hot + blue" begins with Neneh Cherry rapping about AIDS while tackling "I've Got You Under My Skin." Given the album's sociopolitical agenda, this is apropos; and note the pun that Cherry surprises in the title, equating an erotic ache with the virus of the age. Cherry wanders from the words and music that Porter wrote—she performs exactly six lines of the song. But the Neville Brothers follow with a luxuriously realized "In the Still of the Night," so lyrical, especially in its part-singing, that it turns what had originated, in the film "Rosalie," as a chore for Nelson Eddy and the listener into a shimmering nocturne. Then comes Sinéad O'Connor's breathy, deliciously needful "You Do Something to Me"—to an accompaniment straight out of the swing era—and we find ourselves at the extraordinary encounter of two essentially hostile traditions, the one with the class and the beauty and the idealism, and the other one with the power: our two great revolutions face to face. Neither side compromises. The rockers work in their signature styles, yet Porter is not precisely rocked. Rather, he turns out to have been the most forward-looking of his circle, something of a modern. Certainly Jimmy Somerville's "From This Moment On" sounds new-minted, his tenorino flying over jittery disco percussion in an apt stylization of the Porterian high life, the man above class and code—above the system. David Byrne's "Don't Fence Me In" crackles in a strings-over-Brazilian-drums arrangement. Is this song really fifty-seven years old, or is it singing young because rock has relatively recently discovered Latin-American music—as Porter did back in the nineteen-thirties? These songs are fresh, yet they speak for a man who left Yale in 1913. "So taunt me," k. d. lang urges, "and hurt me." This is Porter in despair, "So in Love" as the anthem of the person who desires more than most of us can get. Jody Watley counters with "After You (who?)"—the one non-standard in the collection—in a late-fifties smooth-orchestra-cum-jazz-piano arrangement, racy and confident: the happy Porter. Band by band, the man's art is brought forth—not celebrated or studied but *performed.* By the time the Fine Young Cannibals reach the bridge of "Love for Sale" ("Let the poets pipe of love"), to a hard, socking beat that means what it says, we think back over all the quaintly striving renditions of this dead-center, no-apologies number about prostitution and realize that some of these songs sound their best on "red hot + blue" because the techniques of past eras weren't as honest as the songs are. What other "Love for Sale" comes this close to the subject? Libby Holman embellishes the tune so heavily that she turns it into "La Traviata." Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians—who appeared in "The New Yorkers" (1930), where the song was introduced—keep it clean. Ella is the Happy Farmer. Jan DeGaetani and Joan Morris have never seen a sidewalk. Shirley Horn is persuasive in a sultry light-jazz setting, but she doesn't respond to the savage heart of the piece as the Cannibals do. They are not adding to Porter; they deliver what's there. Yet if it has always been there how





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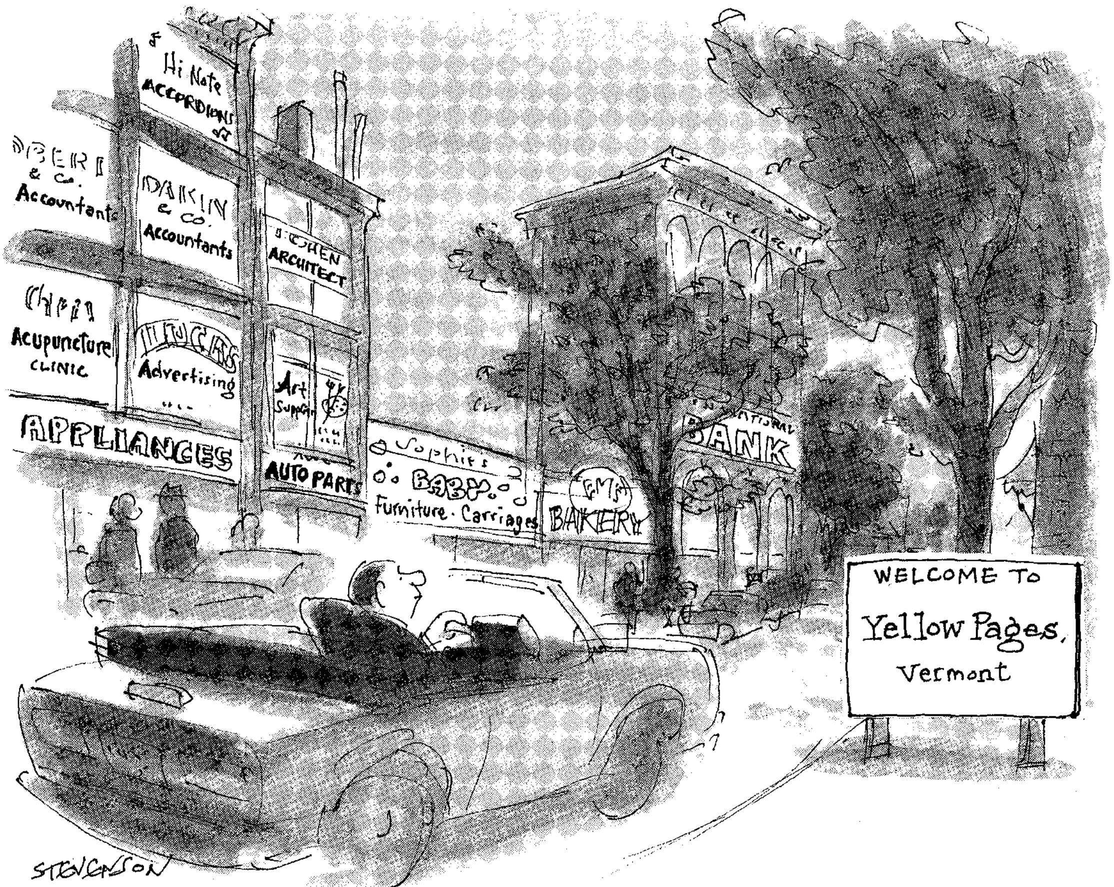


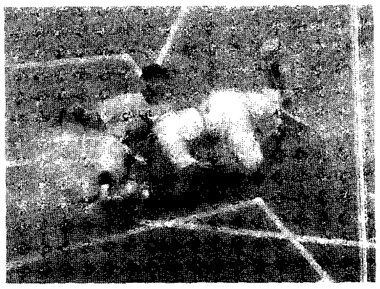
come no one has captured it before?

Some of "red hot + blue" actively recasts the songs. Salif Keita's "Begin the Beguine" rewrites the melody, shifting the metre from a flowing 4/4 to a jostling 12/8, and translates the words into an African language few listeners will command. This is a post-modernist Porter, more commented on than presented: a black man redefines white man's rhythm. Much of "red hot + blue" falls into this analytical line, as if twentieth-century art ran inevitably from Expressionism through "Citizen Kane" to k. d. lang's "So in Love." What an odd interlude, then, to reach back to Marvin Gaye's 1966 duet with Kim Weston (unreleased until recently, in a Gaye retrospective) of "Let's Do It," the two bouncing along so joyously that the song might have been a Motown original. The singers make a tease of the coda, by turns begging and insisting with repetitions of the title line, like Billie Holiday *advocating* doing it rather than merely citing exemplars who *do* do it.

Think of it this way: Ethel Merman is "naïve" Porter and "red hot + blue" is "sentimental" Porter, to echo Schiller's definitions of instinctual and reflective art. Nonetheless, U2's "Night and Day" manages to combine the natural performance with the considered one. The band disdains the threes against twos and some of the chromatic descents of the original vocal line to center on the song's emotional content, the "oh, such a hungry yearning, burning inside of me"—something that rock, especially U2, is better equipped to express than the pit orchestras or dance bands of Porter's day were. Over on EMI Classics, in a new all-Porter recital, the opera baritone Thomas Hampson gives us a note-and-word-perfect "Night and Day" in Hans Spialek's orchestration (including the ensuing dance music), prepared for the original production of "Gay Divorce." (Its authenticity is somewhat undercut in that Fred Astaire rejected it and ultimately performed the number in a scoring by the show's other orchestrator, Robert Russell Bennett.) Hampson sings well, if without the brio he brings to the album's comic numbers, and the dance section is heady, with a wonderfully ballsy tutti on the "oh, such a hungry yearning" phrase. It puts Astaire in view. Still, Hampson's "Night and Day" pales next to U2's throbbing version. A rock band won't give us exactly what Porter wrote, but it gives us precisely what Porter *felt.*

Many of the "red hot + blue" cuts connect us so directly to Porter that they call into question the prestige of original casts, of "authentic" style. Do we need to refer to Merman in considering Lisa Stansfield's "Down in the Depths (on the ninetieth floor)"? Although we are bemused by the period scoring, with its glamorous hook and its discreetly muted brass, the vocal performance is modern, and the band starts rocking in the release ("When the only one you wanted wants another"), reminding us that Porter himself was rocking all this time and nobody knew it, because music couldn't do that in those days—not white music, anyway. Kirsty MacColl's "Miss Otis Regrets" similarly liberates Porter, in that his spoof of a wailing country ballad is always played for elegance—remember Fred Astaire, on one of his television specials, giving it the white-gloves-and-perfect-nose treatment as a British servant? With the Irish folk-rock group the Pogues backing MacColl, the tune is shrilled and wailed as it always should have been, and then, without warning, the troupe explodes into "Just One of Those Things."

Apparently, the Pogues were only to have accompanied MacColl, but with artists this rich on hand you don't want to be stingy, and the cut turned into a medley. The Pogues' vocalist, Shane MacGowan (spelled MacGowen on the "red hot + blue" leaflet), has all the drawbacks that every rock detractor has been citing since Elvis: mushy diction, sloppy phrasing, and a general lack of joie de vivre. O.K., he's no Snooky Lanson. Yet the group as a whole generates lots of excitement—MacGowan truly earns his sportive howl near the end. On the other hand, how gently Roddy Frame, of Aztec Camera, presents "Do I Love You?," with the orchestration paying homage to the soothing scale passage



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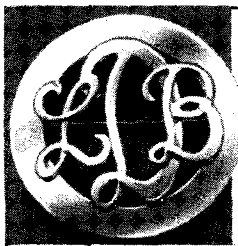

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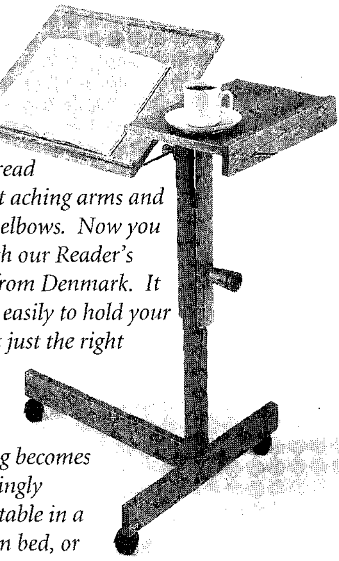
that outlined Buddy Bregman's arrangement for Ella Fitzgerald. This diversity of scoring makes "red hot + blue" the least monotonous rock record ever; even "Sgt. Pepper" didn't shift its gears this provocatively, cut by cut. When James Fearnley's accordion slips into Annie Lennox' "Ev'ry Time We Say Goodbye," breaking up the typical Porter lament with a ruefully dreamy interlude, we begin to acknowledge each number as something unique, separate, despite the shared mission of reëncountering Porter and advancing AIDS charities. This is truly an anthology, a gathering. The very juxtaposition of the approximate MacGowan and the exceedingly musical Lennox is telling. The Pogues are a pleasurable noise shooting through a Porter song; Lennox *is* a Porter song. She follows the pattern of most of the album's singers in that she edits "Ev'ry Time," lengthening the metrical value of the A phrases and altering the melodic configuration of the line "They allow you to go"—for the better, I think; Porter's writing is awkward here. More important, Lennox builds an extraordinary intensity less by interpreting the number than by inhabiting it. The performance is a very consistent, subtly inflected one; some might call it the album's best cut precisely because it is the one least affected by rock. I call it one of the best recordings of a Porter song ever made, because it is not affected by anything. Lennox' alterations notwithstanding, it's pure: the words, the music, a voice, and just enough accompaniment to take us from the intro to the button. It works even better on the video, wherein Lennox is seen "saying goodbye": running home movies of a little boy gambolling with his younger sister. (Viewers may take them for Lennox and a brother dead of AIDS; they are in fact the movie director Derek Jarman, unable to participate in "red hot + blue" because of this same illness, and Jarman's sister.)

It is difficult to speak of music nowadays without referring to its accompanying videos: the importance of MTV as a promotional outlet has elevated the video from part of the process to a process itself. MacColl and the Pogues claim the most delightful of the "red hot + blue" videos, directed by Neil Jordan as a stand-and-deliver concert that is vivified by the invasion of group



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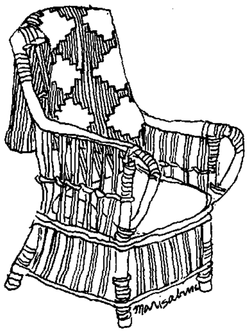
after group of ethnic dancers while MacGowan lurks and shambles around as one of rock's favorite types, the unprofessional pro. "Begin the Beguine" comes off well, too, in an African pageant that helps explain Keita's demented scrambling of the piece; and both k. d. lang's and Jimmy Somerville's videos feature gay images, essential in any "visualization" of what Porter's songs refer to.

The use of video strengthens the songs' ability to stand on their own—ironically, since this strengthening distances them from the belief of Porter and his age that Broadway scores were integral rather than a clump of excerpts. The "red hot + blue" album underlines this shift of emphasis with a somewhat unbalanced program that seems to bunch Porter into certain constituent parts, extra heavy on the ballads. There are only two comedy numbers, the Thompson Twins' "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?" and Iggy Pop and Debbie Harry's "Well, Did You Evah!" Both titles are third-rate Porter; still, it is grand to find, in this company, rock's first and ultimate punk, Iggy Pop, trading pseudo-society chat with Harry. In the video, they build an air of such disreputable idleness that the final shot is apocalyptic: "Next July we collide with Mars."



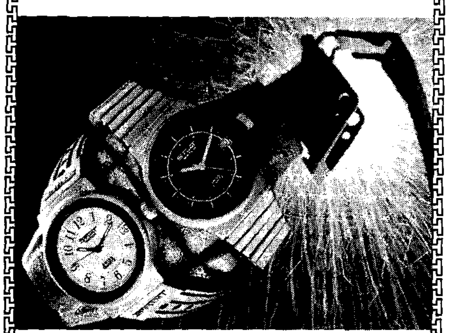
Comedy is intrinsic to Porter, so this is short weight. Wonderful as Sinéad O'Connor's "You Do Something to Me" is, why couldn't we have her doing "After All, I'm Only a Schoolgirl"? Where are the dancing rhythm numbers, like "Anything Goes" or "Ridin' High"? (We do get "Too Darn Hot," but in an underpowered reading by Erasure.) And where are the signature Porter list songs? True, their allusions call up touchstones beyond the reach of the rock generation—Botticelli, Keats, Shelley, and maybe Ovaltine as well. Rock lyrics don't allude, because rock's audience doesn't know anything. When Sting, in "Don't Stand So Close to Me," sings

> *He starts to shake and cough*
> Just like the old man in
> That book by Nabokov

we are jarred. Sting reads! But the rock revolution displaced the Kern-Hammerstein generation's quasi-élite work with music pitched to Charles K. Harris's masses. For all Sting's considerable art, he is playing to a mob.

Clearly, "red hot + blue" is aware of this paradox, for its roster of performers demonstrates a balance of the popular and the unusual—not some of one group and some of another but one group of largely unusual and yet, with a few exceptions, more or less popular musicians. "Is Tom Waits in it?" one friend asked guardedly, much as a movie buff might ask, when you cite an old Fox musical, "Is El Brendel in it?" Waits, who can be heard on Hal Wilner's Weill and Disney disks, hoarsely emptying the room on "What Keeps Mankind Alive?" and murkily deconstructing "Heigh-Ho," is indeed on "red hot + blue," handling "It's All Right with Me." Waits is presumably meant to deputize for rock's blues sector. Vocally, the blues has been a disaster area—with the obvious exceptions—throughout its history, getting by more on attitude than on timbre, and Waits represents this tendency all too well. Aside from his sheer tonelessness and lack of dramatic relationship to the song, he makes no attempt even to hit Porter's notes, chanting the piece as—here we consult the video—he throws himself around on someone's back porch. If "red hot + blue" needed a blues spot, why not Dr. John, a blues singer with voice and style? "It's All Right with Me" would have been right up his alley.

It is instructive that when "red hot + blue" errs it is not through a miscalculation in the meeting of Porter and rock but through inherent flaws in rock itself: not only in Waits' ungainly sound but in the two hip-hop numbers. This street art—for all its folkish energy and political awareness—puts all its work into the lyrics, and in lyrics rock is weak. Rockers universally confuse assonance with rhyme, invent atrocious grammar, and misconstrue words. Worst of all, rappers devise their musical background through a technique known as sampling, in which other performers' tapes are rerun and blended into a "new" soundscape, over which we hear, most often, the egomaniacal tirade of a King Cock in a world of



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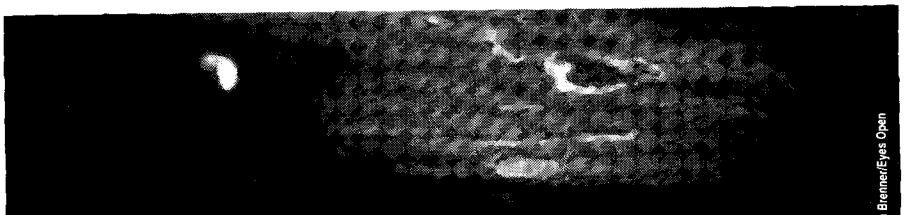
Bitches. Neneh Cherry's cut is at least ecumenical in subject, and it does turn on a charming musical hook, which Cherry introduces and a pianist imitates. But Cherry scants the song she is billed as singing, and the Jungle Brothers utter no more than the title line of "I Get a Kick Out of You," though the album lists them as performing the song. The don't: they rap. Obviously, Cherry and the Jungle Brothers are on hand to support the album's identity as representative not of Porter but of rock. This is stretching the equation too far. Porter is music and rock is music. Rap isn't music.

Is a cycle of anthologies on the way? The "red hot + blue" album was recently joined by "Deadicated," songs of the Grateful Dead interpreted by such performers as Elvis Costello, Bruce Hornsby, Los Lobos, and Jane's Addiction. Except for Suzanne Vega's haunting "China Doll," Lyle Lovett's touching "Friend of the Devil," and Dr. John's inspiringly musical "Deal," the album does not so much reconsider the material, in the style of "red hot + blue," as energize the Dead's languid cool with a stronger beat. This robs the songs of the Dead's native quality, amiability. The "red hot + blue" gang, paradoxically, has respected, and in some cases crystallized, Porter's native qualities.

"What would Porter have thought?" my friends ask with a shudder. More to the point, what would Charles K. Harris have thought? Or Buddy Holly? Maybe rock needs an infusion of Porter, of the values of craftsmanship which his generation made sacred. Porter has certainly had an infusion of rock: Warner Brothers, which publishes Porter's music, has put out a "red hot + blue" songbook notated to conform to the versions on the record.

It will be interesting, perhaps alarming, to see whether these newly styled arrangements take hold in years to come, and are covered, or even restyled, in their turn. Will it be rock that we hear, or just a Cole Porter song? For now, at least, we have a fascinating demonstration album that, at its best, is at once superb Porter and superb rock, bending our two unique and alienated pop traditions into an embrace that Porter—alone of his kind, I think—would have found terrific.

—ETHAN MORDDEN



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BOOKS

Radical Prosodist

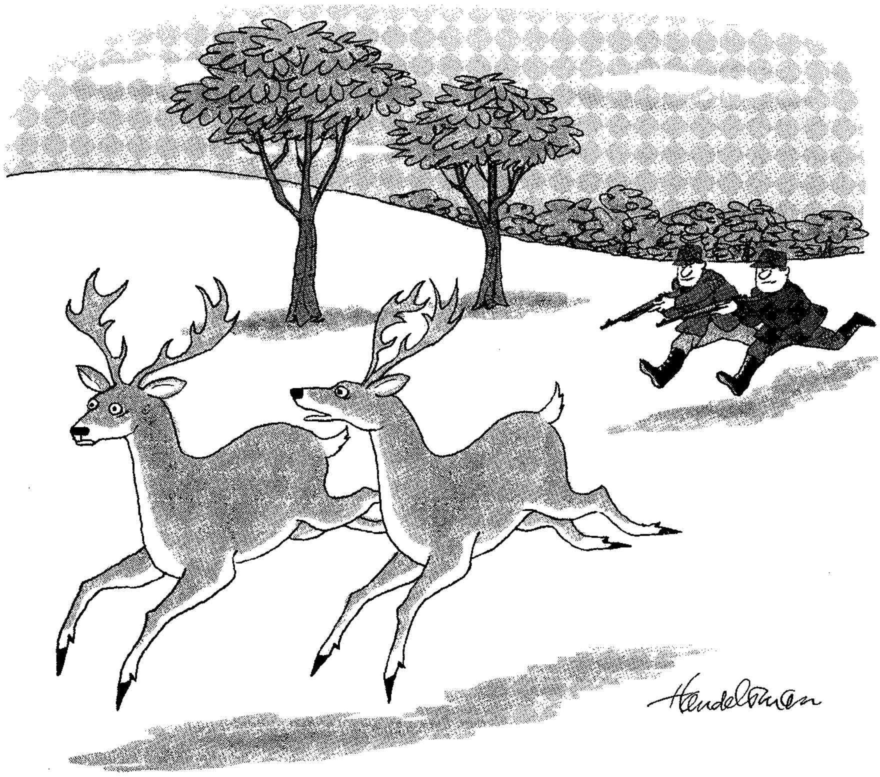
THOUGH compact and lightweight, Norman H. MacKenzie's new edition of the poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins is a backbreaker. To these dense and difficult lyrics—a body of verse more challenging, perhaps, than anything our language had previously known—MacKenzie has attached an inventory of dense and elaborate notes. He has gone at each verse, including fragments and juvenilia not heretofore collected, with tireless doggedness, leaving unremarked no stray allusion, no echo from poem to poem, no umbilical tie to Hopkins' earlier letters and journals. The time that has gone into the compiling of this book, "The Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins" (Oxford; $175), is dizzying to ponder. One need merely consult MacKenzie's acknowledgments—to various astronomers, geologists at the British Museum, scholars of Welsh and Latin, ornithologists, researchers at Scotland Yard's Forensic Document Examination Laboratory, and a physicist who demonstrated expertise with something called an Infra-red Image Converter—to feel overwhelmed.

Reading even one short poem under MacKenzie's guidance can be a sizable task. As an experiment, I timed how long it took me to follow up, in a well-equipped university library, the notes to a single sonnet—the relatively straightforward "God's Grandeur." A little over three hours was needed both to evaluate the textual variants and to track down and skim as much of the critical commentary as was locatable. A couple of weeks of solid work would be required, I suppose, to bring the same thoroughness to a substantial poem like "The Wreck of the Deutschland."

Who has enough time for such things? Needless to say, it would be a great relief if MacKenzie's labors could be dismissed as a colossal waste of effort. To be sure, the book has its obvious faults, chief among them a painfully self-congratulatory introduction and, throughout, a curious blindness to Hopkins' legacy for other poets. MacKenzie's approach is tightly academic, and, while there is apparently no scholarly journal so tertiary or far-flung that he has failed to notice when it has featured something about "GMH" (he refers the reader to publications from ten countries), he shows little familiarity with the tributes and analyses that more recent poets have put forward. Hopkins has been deracinated from the tradition that would have mattered most to him as a poet. Still, MacKenzie's erudition, sympathy, and common sense insure that even those readers who think they know Hopkins well will find in these pages occasion for reappraisal and refreshment. Again and again, MacKenzie makes us see things anew.

Readers may wish to try, as a companion to MacKenzie, Robert Bernard Martin's new biography, "Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Very Private Life" (Putnam; $29.95), which offers the complementary virtues of spaciousness, ease, and good humor. A professor emeritus at Princeton and the author of a biography of Tennyson, Martin is commendably lucid about certain aspects of English life which might confuse American readers. He is especially good at steering us through the religious labyrinth that surrounded Hopkins when he went up to Oxford in 1863—the tensions among Tractarians, Ritualists, High Church, Broad Church, Low Church, Roman Catholics. In doing so, he makes vividly clear just how much Hopkins stood to lose, professionally and socially, when he chose, at the age of twenty-two, to convert to Catholicism.

Martin's subtitle might be taken as an oblique, judicious apologia. Hopkins' life holds many gaps and uncertainties. With his distrust of self-pity, his stiff reticence, and his self-effacement, Hopkins can seem an enchanting but oddly unbordered soul—someone not easily boxed within the foursquare confines of a book. (It doesn't help matters that many of his private papers were destroyed—some by the poet himself, who often viewed literature as a sinful distraction from his duties as a priest, and others, posthumously, by his Jesuit brethren, who failed to understand the value that posterity would place on them.) A moment in one of Hopkins' letters to his great friend Robert Bridges (who became, after Hopkins' death, both Poet Laureate and Hopkins' literary executor) crystallizes for me his curious, endear-



"It's tough, but their right to keep and bear arms must not be infringed."

ing mixture of sweetness and remoteness: "You sometimes now address me by my Christian name and I like it but I do not you by yours, for first it wd. not feel natural to me and secondly it wd. be unnecessary, for your surname is the prettier." To Martin's credit, this side of Hopkins—formal but fanciful, distant but candid—comes through in the biography. Martin gives us a puzzling but endlessly appealing man.

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS was born in 1844, in Stratford, Essex, and died in 1889, in a Jesuit home in Dublin, where he had spent the last six years of his life. Both his father, a prosperous marine-insurance broker, and his mother, a distant relative of Gainsborough, outlived him. His father died at the age of seventy-nine, his mother at ninety-nine; one of his sisters reached the age of ninety-seven, and a brother ninety-eight. They were a hardy bunch, and it is scarcely surprising that the poet, susceptible throughout his life to minor nervous ailments, was continually fretted over.

By convention, poets are meant to be frail, and the Hopkins who has come down to us in photographs and portraits—diminutive and fine-boned, pale and fair-haired—keeps our presuppositions intact. What is surprising is the unshakable adamancy he could sometimes display toward men in authority, beginning with his father, a staunch Anglican. The letters he wrote at the time of his conversion reveal little of the hesitancy and tremulousness we might expect; religion steeled him. Indeed, he was capable of addressing anyone who challenged him on issues of faith—even a former spiritual mentor—with a hard certainty that verged on hauteur, and he was not above exhorting friends who were not Catholic to "purge" themselves of "heresy." His character blended docility with an intermittent pugnacity, and in retrospect his composition of what are known as the Terrible Sonnets—those late verses in which titanic outpourings of anguish over the inscrutability of divine justice yield uneasily to an accession to God's will—has the look of inevitability.

Hopkins may well have been a manic-depressive, as his lifelong alternation of febrile outbursts of energy and protracted, abject lethargies suggests. In any event, he succumbed in the last years of his life to a despondency so profound and, at times, so peculiarly

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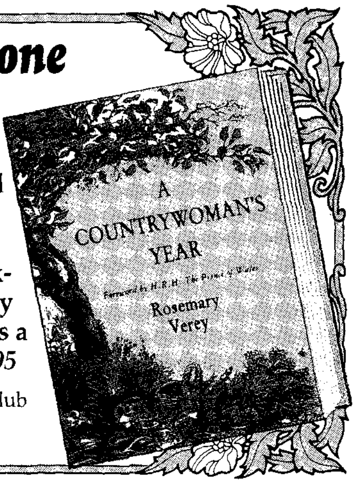

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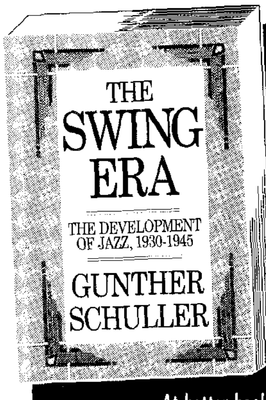

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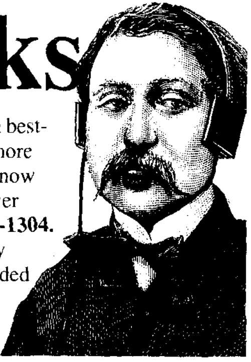

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abstracting that modern doctors would almost certainly have diagnosed a clinical depression. Martin is not very helpful about such matters. One might have expected him to draw on recent research into the causes and symptoms of depression. Instead, he has chosen a middle road—avoiding, on the one hand, anything that smacks of the scientific, and dismissing, on the other, any serious recourse to the divine. Unfortunately, those who pursue a middle road into Hopkins' psyche are likely to miss the quale of a man who was, throughout his life, a creature of extremes, and the result—at least, in Martin's book—can be a dilute and bloodless portrait. A more commanding figure might have emerged had Martin rigorously followed either a psychoanalytical line (one that might plausibly root much of Hopkins' religious turmoil, and particularly his need to "come out" as a Catholic, in his apparently unconsummated homosexual impulses) or an explicitly religious one (an approach in accord with Hopkins' own conviction that he was responding to Heavenly imperatives). The disappointing truth is that Hopkins' religiosity—above all, his belief in "barely credible" miracles—seems to discomfit Martin.

Nor is Martin very helpful (though here, admittedly, the task is formidable) in sketching the genesis of Hopkins' art. Where in the world did this singular prosodist come from? Has any poet ever got up his verses in more outlandish attire? As signals of his metrical intentions Hopkins employed more than a dozen diacritical marks, which his editors have mostly deleted over the years but which are present in eye-catching profusion in MacKenzie's new edition. The result can look more like a technical piece of linguistic analysis than anything a poet might devise:

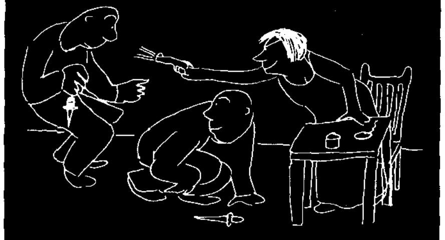
On ẽar and ear two noises too old to end
  Trench—r̋ight, the tide that ra̋mps
      against the shore;
  With a flood or a fall, low lull-off or áll
      róar,
Fréquénting thére while moon shall wẽar
      and wend.

*

Not of all my eyes see, wa̋ndering on the
      world,
Is ánything a mílk to the mínd so, ső, sȉghs
      de̋ep
Poetry tó it, as a tree whose boughs brȅak
      in the sky.

On those rare occasions when Martin tenders some literary analysis, he can sound embarrassingly vapid and tautological: "Surely, such deeply felt poems reflect his most intense personal emotions at the time." Or "Both his own works and what he read elsewhere acted as stages on which his feelings could be played out." To be fair, Hopkins saw himself primarily as a man of God and only peripherally as a poet, and might well have maintained that any portrait of him that captured the vigor of his religious journey—as "A Very Private Life" manages to do—had its essentials in place. But the poet has got away from Martin.

BY common consent, Hopkins' genius burned brightest in the sonnet. He was something of a miniaturist by temperament, not only in his poetry but in his ink sketches and musical compositions, and besides "The Deutschland" he wrote few long, or even longish, poems. Roughly a quarter of his finished verses are sonnets, a genre that suited his talents in at least three significant ways. To begin with, it set up a fruitful contrast between form and expression: the sonnet's familiarity accentuated his novel eccentricities of syntax, typography, prosody. Much of the energy in his sonnets (as in E. E. Cummings') derives from a kind of temporal tug-of-war, the verses pulling simultaneously toward venerable constructions and radically forward-looking modes of exposition. The sonnet also insured, by its sheer brevity, that he would not (usually) become entangled in tortuous locutions. (Its brevity was something Hopkins lamented, writing to a friend that the sonnet in English is "not long enough" to avoid results that are "short, light, tripping, and trifling." That he nonetheless composed what he called "curtal sonnets," of ten and a half rather than fourteen lines, says much about his perverse, headstrong formal impulses.) In his longer poems, there is always the danger that the multiple strands of his diction will come to look not woven or embroidered so much as simply knotted; the pattern of the whole is always on the verge of being lost. Lastly, the Petrarchan sonnet's bipartite structure—octave and sestet—was beautifully tailored to Hopkins' characteristic motion from the terrestrial to the supernal, the evanescent to the eternal. In a number of his sonnets, man might be said to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inhabit the octave, God the sestet. The poems climb.

For this reader, literature offers perhaps no greater pleasure—certainly no wonder more breathtaking—than that magician's feat wherein the sonnet, so small and rigid a container, unfolds a meaningful vision of the world. I'm thinking of such jewelled miracles as Shakespeare's Sonnet 60 ("Like as the waves . . ."), in which the span of human life stands out in naked, shivering relief; or Milton's Sonnet 19 ("When I consider . . ."), from which we come away feeling that our place in the hierarchy of animals and angels has been clarified; or Shelley's "Ozymandias," in which the summit of man's vanity topples beneath earth's crushing indifference or Frost's "Design," which peeks into a nightmare universe where malevolence jostles with chaos. Into this élite company I would enter my two favorite nineteenth-century sonnets, both of them by Hopkins—"As kingfishers catch fire . . ." and "God's Grandeur." The former beautifully encapsulates that religious paradox in which each object under Heaven is constantly individuating itself ("*myself* it speaks and spells, / Crying *What I do is me: for that I came*") the better to mirror the singleness of God's creation: the more disparate the parts, the more splendid the unity of the whole. And the preternatural sweep of "God's Grandeur" prefigures those space-flight photographs in which Earth dwindles to the size of a hydrangea blossom:

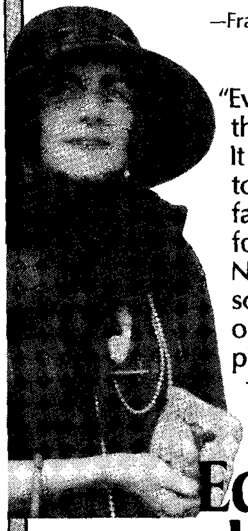
The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
  It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
  It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
  And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared, with toil;
  And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And, for all this, nature is never spent;
  There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
  Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs—
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
  World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

Both sonnets were written in 1877, the year Hopkins turned thirty-three. When one considers that he wrote nine others that year, including "Spring," "The Windhover," and "The Sea and the Skylark," one might plausibly argue that in no other verified year has any poet so enriched the English sonnet. (All hundred and fifty-four of Shakespeare's sonnets may have been written in less than a year, as some critics have postulated, but the circumstances of their creation remain conjectural.) In any case, had Hopkins written nothing else the sonnets of 1877—a body of work totalling less than two hundred lines—would surely have been sufficient to lodge a large claim on posterity.

Much of the force and oddness of Hopkins' sonnets stems from his stringent views about rhyme. He was a stickler about end rhyme, insisting that it almost always be exact. Even those off-rhymes sanctioned by long tradition (e.g., prove / love) irked him, and he reproached Bridges for the "barbarous rhyme of *prow* and *show*," and roundly reprimanded another friend for his "most offensive" rhyming of "open vowels to silent *rs*." And yet he could be a brash innovator with rhyme, provided that such innovations were tucked into the body of the poem rather than attached to end words. Drawing on *cynghanedd*, the "consonant chime" of Welsh verse, he became the first poet in English to make frequent use of what has since come to be called pararhyme or rim rhyme (e.g., light / late; soon / seen), although he almost never paired it to end words—a practice not systematically taken up until the next century, when Wilfred Owen used it to re-create the ferocity of the First World War. Hopkins liked to set rim rhymes near each other ("sight unsought," "will not well," "bald and bold"), or even side by side ("rolls reels"), and he sometimes stacked or interlaced them ("heeds but hides, bodes but abides," "blood-gush blade-gash"). He was fond as well of reverse rhyme (the "breath and bread" of the second line of "The Deutschland") and *rime riche* ("ware one where"). Indeed, if one considers rhyme in its most inclusive sense—as the ringing of auditory similarities, patterned or not—it seems clear that no one in our tradition has ever composed in a more rhyme-ridden mode. He was forever rhyming not words so much as clumps of sound: "a lush-kept plush-capped sloe," "never-eldering revel and river," "the down-dugged ground-hugged

"Undeniably fascinating."
—Frances Donaldson, *New York Times Book Review*



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grey." Time and again, his lines feel almost like tongue twisters:

> the past-prayer, pent in prison,
> The-last-breath penitent spirits
>
> Tatter-tangled and dingle-a-dangled
> Dandy-hung dainty head
>
> That piecemeal peace is poor peace. What
> pure peace allows

Taken together, Hopkins' straitlaced end rhymes and experimental internal rhymes engendered a distinctive hybrid. At first glance, as the eye floats down the page picking up some of the end rhymes on the way, the verse looks conventional; it is only when you venture inside, into the inner workings of the poem, that you find the radical prosodist. In his sonnets Hopkins at once respected the form punctiliously and created a harsh music that wreaked violence on it. It is tempting—if risky, for this is shaky ground—to discern in the volatile blending of outward conformity and inward rebellion a little paradigm of Hopkins' life. Tempting to see in it, say, a contending between an outer man of Spartan self-abnegation—black-robed, tonsured—and an inner man who was by inclination something of a sybarite. Or between the priest who had eagerly pledged himself to lifelong celibacy and an inner man of forbidden carnal promptings.

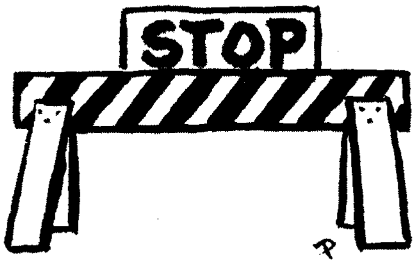
ONE of the most striking—and at times annoying—aspects of Hopkins' poetry is how true it remained to his wayward impulses. These were pursued not merely in substantial matters, such as tone and subject, but also in the minutest details of phrasing and word choice, where one might reasonably suppose that he, who repeatedly upbraided other poets for their "obscurity," would have accommodated himself to his readers. The first few lines of "The Windhover" provide a good example:

> I caught this morning morning's minion, king-
> dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-
> drawn Falcon, in his riding
> Of the rolling level underneath him
> steady air, and striding
> High there, how he rung upon the rein of a
> wimpling wing
> In his ecstasy!

Given the large number of oddities amassed here (that thumping repetition of "morning morning's," the broken enjambment of "king-/dom," the alliterative excesses, the outsized length of the second and third lines), Hopkins might have been expected to forgo the word "caught," which in this context misleadingly suggests "seized" or "captured" rather than "saw" or "beheld." Yet he seems blithely—but accurately—to have assumed that a misled reader would find clarity on rereading. Or, perhaps, that anyone prone to error was not to be catered to, since one's ideal reader is free from all misapprehension. "The only just judge, the only just literary critic, is Christ," he wrote to a friend. Unfortunately, this knowledge was not always the comfort it should have been; he was deeply wounded by the regularity with which his work, on those occasions when he submitted it for publication, suffered rejection.

It is something of a shame, perhaps, that Hopkins' music is so exclusively his own, rather than a communal harmony arrived at over generations; modern poets who seek after similar effects may discover that his looming, solitary ghost overshadows their verses. When, for instance, Auden concludes a winsome sestina with the phrase "then water / Would gush, flush, green these mountains and these valleys," the reader is apt to cry not "Lovely!" but, triumphantly, "Hopkins!"—even if he doesn't call up the phrase "Gush!—flush the man" from "The Deutschland." Paradoxically, Hopkins' pathbreaking exploits make him difficult to follow. What is most enchanting about him is what proves to be most hazardous to emulate. His influence is usually at its most benign when it is mildly sensed, as in the verse of Elizabeth Bishop, who once called him her favorite nineteenth-century English poet. For instance, in the closing line of her beautiful "One Art"—"though it may look like (*Write* it!) like disaster"—I hear an echo of the close of Hopkins' "Carrion Comfort": "Of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling with (my God!) my God." But it's a faint one—no louder, perhaps, than the trace of George Herbert, who is often found loitering around parenthetical utterances.

Nowhere is the irrepressibility of Hopkins' individualism more apparent than in his word coinages. With something of a counterfeiter's rash abandon, he minted new terms whenever the language failed to provide precisely the currency he desired. Many of these look preposterous: "churlsgrace," "Amansstrength," "baldbright," "throughther." To my mind, his neologisms provide a precise fixing of the boundaries of poetic license. To coin "betweenpie," as Hopkins did in one of his sonnets, is to journey to the very edge of the permissible. But to enlist it as a *verb* (which, the reader comes to realize, is what Hopkins has done) is surely to commit an offense against poetic license.



His willingness to risk self-parody and to court silliness helps explain the one exception to his avoidance of off-rhyme: his penchant for elaborate polysyllabic rhymes of a sort usually associated with light verse. One might say that he jilted off-rhyme only to lose his heart to off-off-rhyme. He was not above rhyming "beauty" with "suit! he" or "communion" with "boon he on." Still more disturbingly, he sometimes reached across a line break in order to complete a rhyme, as when he matched "leeward" with "drew her" and the opening "d" of the next line's "Dead," or matched "savior" with "gave you a /R[apturous]." Such rhymes, when they appear in poetry of the gravest sort—religious poetry—can sound not just bizarre but grotesque. I know of no passage anywhere whose rhymes are more unsettling than those of Stanza 31 of "The Deutschland," in which he links "pain, for the" with "vein for the" and "grain for thee"; "rest of them" with "unconfessed of them" and "breast of the / M[aiden]"; and "Providence" with "of it, and / S[tartle]." For this reader, such quirks render impossible any appreciation of the poem as a totality. It's hard to see it as anything other than an assemblage of disparate brilliancies—a approach, incidentally, that Hopkins himself sanctioned. When Bridges, who found the poem incomprehensible, wrote that he would not read it again for any sum of money, Hopkins urged him to "pay attention to the best and most intelligible stanzas."

PRONE as Hopkins was to self-castigation, his realization that religious devotion was insufficient to safeguard him from long bouts of anguished depression was itself cause for a deepening of depression. In his last years, he may have been not only thoroughly miserable but (the scanty evidence suggests) mentally unstable. He saw himself, increasingly, as a failure, and his late letters and journals—he wrote few poems toward the end—brim with self-reproach. In one of the Terrible Sonnets, he refers to himself as "time's eunuch." He saw himself as someone who had produced no offspring—physical, artistic, or spiritual—that would outlive him.

A century later, the view is altogether different, for believers and non-believers alike. He inspirits us. For devout readers there is the comfort of knowing that Hopkins, that resolute and beautiful man, has been lifted from earthly torment into a realm of peace and joy everlasting. And for others there is the keen pleasure—always something of a surprise—of seeing justice accomplished on earth: the verses that were scorned in Hopkins' lifetime have been embraced across the globe. Time's eunuch turns out to have fathered a race of immortals.

—BRAD LEITHAUSER

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

THE SWEET HEREAFTER, by Russell Banks (HarperCollins; $20). This novel is about a terrible school-bus accident that devastates a rural community in upstate New York. Unwillingly, inevitably, we are hooked from the first sentence, as the bus driver remembers something materializing in the road before her: "A dog—it was a dog I saw for certain." There are only three other narrators who describe the accident and its aftermath—a suddenly childless Vietnam vet and model citizen who runs the local garage; a brilliant, enraged negligence lawyer from New York; and a now crippled teen-age beauty queen—but through their stories the entire grief-stricken community, besieged by lawyers and members of the press, comes vividly into focus. In fact, Russell Banks' vision of this town, with its trailers, looming mountains, county fair, and annual demolition derby, is so sharp and sure that it seems at first to promise us some corresponding moral clarity unavailable to the mourning and warring inhabitants. But the author is quick to correct this assumption and expose its arrogance. Finally, it is not the emotional impact of the story told but the restless and uncompromising intelligence of Mr. Banks' telling that makes this such a very good book.

THE FINAL ADDICTION, by Richard Condon (St. Martin's; $19.95). This jape of a novel is the story of Owney Hazman, a frankfurter wholesaler whose chief ambition is to be reunited with the mysterious mother who abandoned him when he was eight. When one of his best customers impetuously recruits him as a go-between in secret negotiations to sell a fleet of oil tankers to the People's Republic of China, Owney is unwittingly drawn into a preposterous intrigue involving the Mafia, cocaine smuggling, an Iranian plot to overthrow the United States government, and the confused and conflicting activities of the intelligence agencies of nearly a dozen foreign powers. The best comic effects of this tale—and it is a very funny one—derive from the deadpan precision with which the author marries completely outlandish and surreal plot developments to accurate but equally surreal descriptions of public service ("as politics is called at its most profitable level") during the Reagan-Bush years. When Owney's mother reappears, she turns out to be what another character calls "a very, very sophisticated civics teacher"—a description that also fits the wonderful Mr. Condon.

NOTE: "The Way We Live Now," by Susan Sontag, with original art by Howard Hodgkin, has been published by Noonday Press / Farrar, Straus & Giroux ($35, paper). The text originally appeared as a short story in these pages.

GENERAL

SAVAGE INEQUALITIES: CHILDREN IN AMERICA'S SCHOOLS, by Jonathan Kozol (Crown; $20). The author has toured the country looking at the effects of poverty on public schooling: in East St. Louis, a high school awash in sewage; in New York City, a windowless elementary school, formerly a roller-skating rink, with an enrollment that far exceeds its theoretical capacity; in Chicago, an elementary school without a library; in Camden, New Jersey, classes

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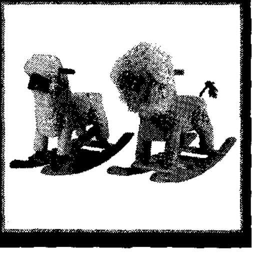

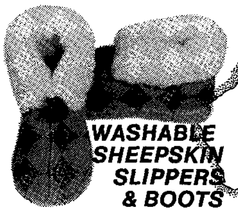

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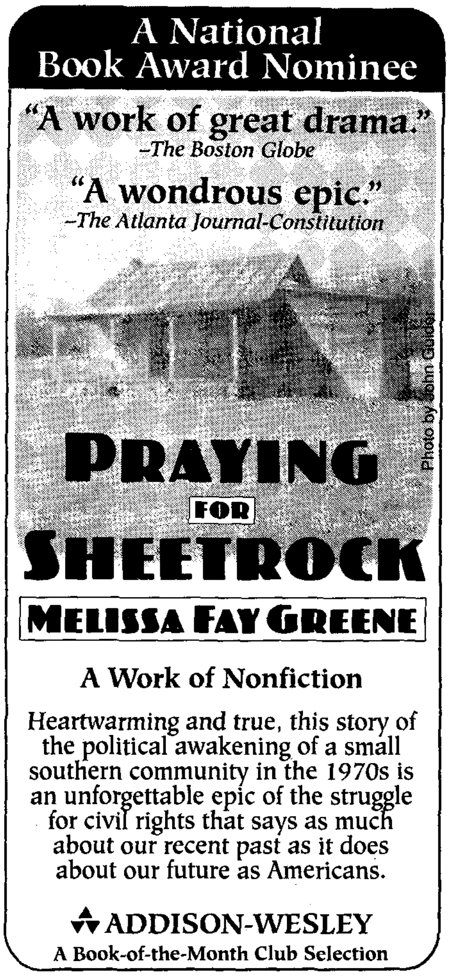
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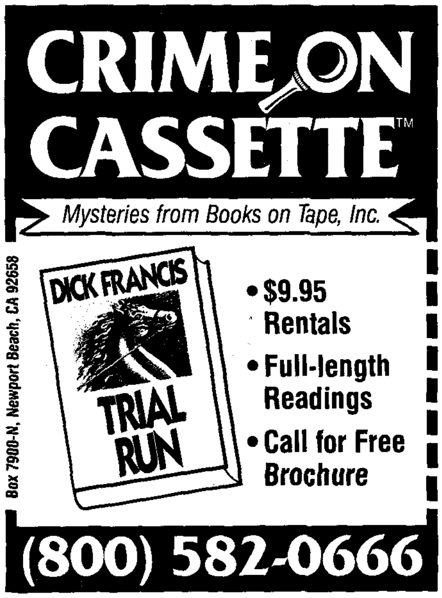
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without textbooks. Mr. Kozol contrasts such schools with the lavish educational plants in rich districts, and explains that though poor neighborhoods often tax property at a higher rate to support local schools, ghetto real estate is not worth much and so the yield is low. Lest readers imagine that the learning problems of poor children are racial or ethnic, the author takes us to a mostly white school in a poor neighborhood in Cincinnati, where the results of no equipment and no books do not differ from the results in poor Hispanic and black neighborhoods. Mr. Kozol includes interviews—by both himself and other reporters—with principals, teachers, and students, and the wistful, telling remarks of American education's victims animate his sad story.

UNQUIET DAYS: AT HOME IN POLAND, by Thomas Swick (Ticknor & Fields; $19.95). More than a decade ago, Mr. Swick, an American travel writer and editor, fell in love with Poland, and with a Polish woman, who became his wife. This memoir of two years—1980-82—in Warsaw, where he supported himself by teaching English, recounts a period of hope, when Solidarity took shape, and then one of fear, when the government imposed martial law. Mr. Swick returned to the United States (his wife followed him), but not before joining the annual pilgrimage to the shrine of the Black Madonna in Czestochowa. The event, which attracted travellers from abroad (some Christian, some merely curious) as well as Poles, was an organized hike of a hundred and fifty miles from Warsaw through the Polish backcountry. The journey resembles a modern "Canterbury Tales," with its mixture of the spiritual, the mundane, and the political, and even readers with no interest in Poland or in religion will find Mr. Swick's superlative account of it rewarding.

HAIG'S COMMAND: A REASSESSMENT, by Denis Winter (Viking; $27.95). This thorough and absorbing study of Douglas (later Lord) Haig, Great Britain's First World War commander, is a masterpiece of historical investigation that is also an indictment, trial, and conviction of its subject and his posthumous supporters. The author has used Canadian, Australian, and American military records to supplement and correct British sources; the last section of his book recounts the way British history was distorted in the postwar period to maintain "the credibility of authority." Mr. Winter recalls Haig's planning and leadership of the battles on the Western Front—the Somme, Passchendaele—that lost a generation of young men, and, after telling us what happened, tells us exactly how Haig's failures and poor decisions were ascribed, variously, to lower commanders, politicians, and the French. Mr. Winter's tone is moderate, and his irreverent assessments are often funny, yet his message—that an ostensibly democratic government can successfully mislead its people about such a crucial matter as why their sons died—is terrifying.

MY WELL-BALANCED LIFE ON A WOODEN LEG: MEMOIRS, by Al Capp (John Daniel; $15.95). The late Al Capp, the creator of the comic strip "Li'l Abner," knew not only how to draw a memorable line but how to write one, as these essays testify. His themes are few but universal: girls; the pain and embarrassment of disfigurement (when Capp was nine, he lost a limb in a traffic accident and acquired a wooden leg); the contrast between the justice and reason of art and the injustice and disorder of life; the anxieties of fame. Despite a penchant for high seriousness, however, Capp's writing is vividly, even hyperbolically, alive. He had a faultless ear, a wicked eye for hypocrisy and self-aggrandizement, a great comic's mastery of repetition, and a poker player's way with a joke, so that just when you think he's about to fold he comes up with a full house.

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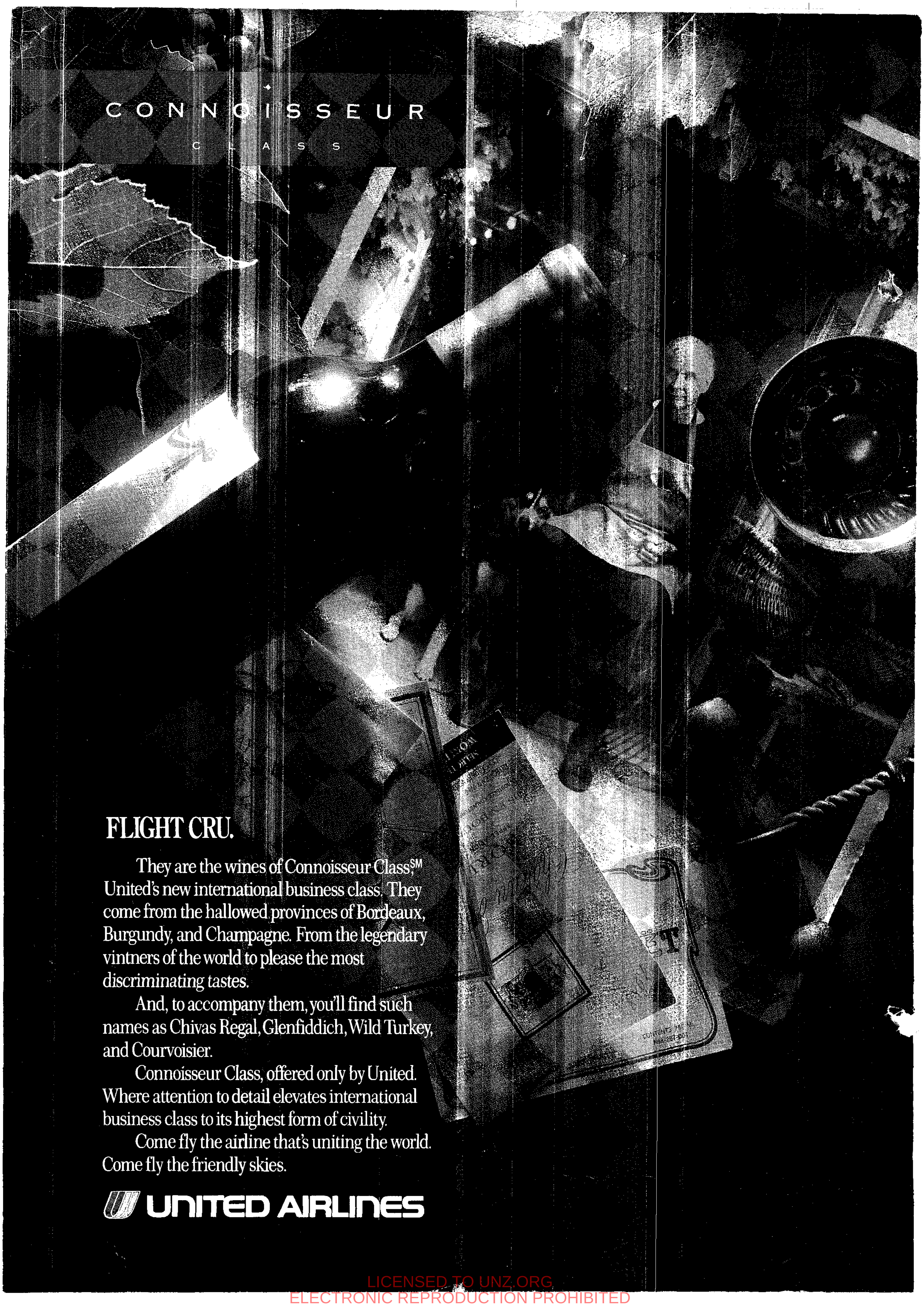

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